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**Journeying Together Towards Goodness:  
Participant Understanding of Practices and Narratives  
in a University of the Nations Discipleship Training School**

John Stephen Peachey  
OCMS, PhD  
March 2020

**ABSTRACT**

This study develops a new hybrid theoretical framework and uses it for an empirical moral inquiry. By investigating participants' understandings of social practices and narratives in the University of the Nations (UofN) Discipleship Training School (DTS) using a multiple individual case study approach, this research infers how processes of moral development and identity formation may be working. Alasdair MacIntyre's philosophical framework for the rationality of virtue formation in a particular tradition is deepened by inserting Vygotsky's theories of genetic analysis and mediation in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Wertsch's unit of analysis of mediated human action to research how students use cultural tools to negotiate the intermediate steps of becoming virtuous. Learning and identity formation are explored in an alternative model of higher education using Lave and Wenger's social learning theory of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) in a Community of Practice (CoP). Resources in practical theology, such as works by Dykstra and Bass, ground this study in the Christian tradition. Particular attention is given to DTS participants' pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtuous character as they learn to relate to those who are 'other'. A composite summary of participants' understanding of a good learning community may guide attempts to cultivate virtuous learning communities that nurture non-coercive rearrangements of desire and human freedom. Rising interest in the place of spirituality and religion in the post-secular academy, the global growth of educational institutions in the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement, and the under-researched expression of UofN education taking place in 112 countries in 55 languages indicate potential international impact. This study enables MacIntyre's virtue ethics framework to be applied in empirical research using sociocultural and activity theories to investigate the processes of learning to become good persons together.







Journeying Together Towards Goodness:  
Participant Understanding of Practices and  
Narratives in a University of the Nations  
Discipleship Training School

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in Middlesex University

March 2020  
Oxford Centre for Mission Studies









## DECLARATIONS

This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed John A. Peachey (Candidate)  
Date 7 March 2020

### STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by midnotes or footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

Signed John A. Peachey (Candidate)  
Date 7 March 2020

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## **DEDICATION**

When I was a young man, I thought I heard God ask me to give all my money away. After one week, the voice spoke again. This time I replied, ‘Well, Lord, if that is you, then tell me where you want me to give it.’ Immediately, three names came to mind, but I argued that I did not want to give it to them. In my opinion, they all handled money unwisely and did not deserve it. Then I heard a question, ‘John, did you deserve the gifts and abilities I gave you?’ After replying that I certainly did not deserve them, I heard, ‘Then John, I want you to learn to be generous, even as I am generous.’ I dedicate this thesis to the generous God I have begun to know as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit whose lovingkindness and grace towards me are totally undeserved.



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Dr Tom Harvey, Dr Hae-Won Kim, Dr Tim Keene, and Dr Guichun Jun. It is, however, the staff behind the scenes who make it possible to complete our studies. I am so grateful for the examples of faithful service I saw in Rev Andrew Anderson, Mr Ralph Bates, Mr Andrew Buck, Miss Nicky Clargo, Mrs Blanche Marslin, Mrs Rachel McIntyre, Miss Irim Sarwar, Mrs Nadine Woods, and fellow candidates Terry Garde and Usha Reifsnider.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>	<i>Page</i>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b><i>i</i></b>
<b>DECLARATIONS</b> .....	<b><i>i</i></b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b><i>i</i></b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	<b><i>i</i></b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS</b> .....	<b><i>iii</i></b>
<b>FIGURES AND TABLES</b> .....	<b><i>vii</i></b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b><i>ix</i></b>
<b>Chapter One</b> .....	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><i>Introduction: Moral Virtue Formation in Higher Education</i></b> .....	<b><i>1</i></b>
<b><i>Seeking to be Distinctively Christian</i></b> .....	<b><i>1</i></b>
Introduction.....	1
MacIntyre’s Wish: A Quite New Kind of Institution .....	1
University and Church as Co-labourers .....	3
Moral Education at University Contested.....	4
Tracing a History of Secularization.....	7
D’Costa’s Argument for Theology and the Church at the Heart of Education .....	9
Higton’s Argument for a University of Intellectual Virtue.....	11
Research Questions for Moral Formation in the UofN DTS.....	14
Restoring the Soul of the University through Reimagining.....	15
Educating Desiring, Imaginative Animals.....	19
Experimenting with Pedagogical Adaptations of Christian Practices .....	22
Conclusion .....	25
<b>Chapter Two</b> .....	<b><i>29</i></b>
<b><i>Extending MacIntyre through Vygotsky:</i></b> .....	<b><i>29</i></b>
<b><i>Mediating Virtue Formation from the External to the Internal and Out Again</i></b> .....	<b><i>29</i></b>
Introduction.....	29
MacIntyre’s Construal of Liberalism as a Tradition.....	29
MacIntyre’s Alternate Vision of University.....	32
MacIntyre’s Neo-Aristotelian Virtue Theory.....	33
MacIntyre’s Conceptual Framework for Developing Virtue .....	35
The Challenge and Necessity of Giving a Teleological Account.....	37
MacIntyre’s Definition of Practice .....	38
Figure 2.1 Tensions Between External and Internal Goods.....	40
MacIntyre’s Scope of Practice .....	41
Practice Theory .....	42
Turning to Vygotsky to Deepen MacIntyre’s Philosophical Framework .....	43
Vygotsky and Sociocultural and Activity Theory .....	45
Wertsch on Vygotsky’s Theoretical Core.....	46
Figure 2.2 Cultural and Natural Lines of Development .....	47
All Higher Mental Functions Originate in Social Relations and Processes .....	48
Understanding Human Action Mediated through Tool and Sign.....	49
Mediating Artefacts in Vygotsky .....	51
Wertsch’s Ten Properties of Mediated Action .....	51
Vygotsky’s Preferred Unit of Analysis: Word as Contextualized Volitional Action.....	53
How Participants Acquire and Use Mediational Tools.....	54
Burke’s Pentad for Investigating Human Action .....	54
Expanding Zones of Proximal Development into Moral Development.....	55
MacIntyre, Vygotsky, and the Telos of Character.....	57
Blind Spots in Using Vygotsky’s Ideas .....	58
Extending Vygotsky through MacIntyre’s Narrative Quest.....	59
Learning through Legitimate Peripheral Participation .....	60
Wenger and Communities of Practice .....	62
Participation and Reification.....	63

Modes of Belonging in Learning and Identity Formation .....	64
Figure 2.3 Becoming Through Enacted Narrative .....	66
Practical Theological Reflections on Christian Practices in Education.....	67
Human Telos in the Christian Tradition .....	69
Moral Development as Virtue Formation in the Christian Tradition .....	73
Conclusion.....	74
<b>Chapter Three.....</b>	<b>77</b>
<b><i>Methodology, Theory, and Data: Connecting and Negotiating Meaning.....</i></b>	<b><i>77</i></b>
Introduction .....	77
The Research Problem.....	77
Research Questions .....	78
Research Approach: Qualitative Interpretive Inquiry .....	79
Case Study as Research Strategy .....	80
Figure 3.1 Research Strategy Overview.....	85
Research Context .....	85
Gathering the Data .....	88
Research Access.....	89
Access to Sites .....	90
Table 3.1 UofN DTS Sites Visited.....	91
Access to Document Data.....	91
Access to People .....	92
Four Types of Participant Expertise.....	92
Table 3.2 Participants and their Expertise.....	94
Four Stages of Data Gathering.....	94
Analysing the Data: Connecting and Negotiating Meaning .....	96
Figure 3.2 Analysing the Data .....	96
Condensing Data: Narrative Summaries .....	97
Condensing Data: Coding.....	97
Table 3.3 Coding Samples ‘Becoming Self-Aware’ .....	98
Case Study Participants: Purposive Sampling for Narrative Display.....	100
Table 3.4 Case Study Participant Selection.....	100
Narrative Construction .....	101
Quotations from Transcripts .....	103
Verifying Data and Conclusions.....	104
Figure 3.3 Drawing and Verifying Conclusions.....	105
Table 3.5 Type 4 Participant Expertise Communities of Practice .....	106
Ethical Considerations.....	107
Reflexivity and Positionality as a Researcher .....	108
Conclusion.....	112
<b>Chapter Four .....</b>	<b>115</b>
<b><i>University of the Nations Discipleship Training Schools: .....</i></b>	<b><i>115</i></b>
<b><i>A Different Kind of University with New Monastic Learning Communities.....</i></b>	<b><i>115</i></b>
Introduction .....	115
The Nature of the UofN as an Institution of Christian Higher Education .....	115
Figure 4.1 Profile of USA Post-secondary Education and CCCU Institutions.....	117
A Degree-Granting, but not Internationally Accredited, Institution .....	117
Table 4.1 YWAM/UofN Annual Statistics with Ten Year Intervals .....	118
Table 4.2 UofN Regional Registrar and Transcripts Offices.....	119
Modular Course Format as a ‘Multiplier for Missions’.....	120
Figure 4.2 UofN Staff, YWAM Staff, and UofN Instructors .....	120
Organization of Modular Courses in Seven Colleges/Faculties.....	121
Table 4.3 UofN Seven Colleges/Faculties and International Centres .....	121
The Story-formed Founding of the UofN as an Institution.....	122
Patterned Narratives of Prayer and Hearing God’s Voice.....	122
A Global University for Missions.....	125
Centred on Jesus Christ and Born out of YWAM.....	127
Decentralized Live Learn Communities.....	128

Focus on Character .....	129
University of the Nations as Worshipping Learning Missional Communities.....	131
YWAM Rostrevor and New Monastic Learning Communities .....	132
A Missional Harbour at An Cuan Serving the Common Good.....	133
Reimagining an Irish Centre of Learning .....	134
Connecting with Religious Orders and Ancient Monasticism .....	135
Resonances with New Monasticism .....	136
Institutions and the Pursuit of External Goods.....	138
Conclusion .....	139
<b>Chapter Five.....</b>	<b>141</b>
<b><i>Mapping Practices in the Discipleship Training School.....</i></b>	<b><i>141</i></b>
<b><i>onto Practices in the Christian Tradition .....</i></b>	<b><i>141</i></b>
Introduction.....	141
MacIntyre’s Lack of Tools to Explore Shared Activities and Practices .....	141
Negotiating Meaning Amidst the Embedded Patterns of Situated Action.....	142
What is the DTS? .....	143
Holding Community Together through Practice .....	145
Dykstra and Bass and Christian Practices.....	146
Turning Activities into Practices through Sociocultural Mediation .....	147
Mapping DTS Activities onto Christian Practices.....	148
Table 5.1 Table of Christian Practices and DTS Activities .....	149
Using Planes of Analysis to Form a Dialectical Double Perspective on Practice .....	152
Table 5.2 Planes of Analysis.....	152
Presenting Six Practices of the YWAM UofN DTS.....	153
The Practice of Worship .....	153
The Practice of Service.....	156
The Practice of Prayer .....	160
The Practice of Holiness.....	164
The Practice of Witness.....	168
The Practice of Fellowship .....	170
DTS Participants’ Understanding of a Good Learning Community.....	173
Table 5.3 Participants’ Understanding of a Good Learning Community .....	174
Conclusion .....	175
<b>Chapter Six.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b><i>Appropriating Mediational Means in Pursuit of Virtue: .....</i></b>	<b><i>177</i></b>
<b><i>Molly’s Case and Others.....</i></b>	<b><i>177</i></b>
Introduction.....	177
Molly1: It is really going to wreck you for normal life .....	178
Molly1: It can completely crack open your worldview, if you let it .....	179
Molly1: God-focused and all about the community .....	181
Molly1: That just blew my mind.....	182
Molly1: Giving abused women an An Cuan, a harbour .....	184
Molly1: Adjusting thoughts, self-questioning, and refocusing towards virtue .....	185
Molly2: Getting an image from God and imagining something bigger than you.....	186
Molly2: I didn’t realize how much fear I dealt with.....	187
Molly2: I definitely came back to recognize the value of having a Christ-driven life .....	189
Molly2: We recognized that we had just shirked off a human being with a need.....	191
Clem2: Humbled by God’s perspective on the world.....	192
Molly3: Choosing to get up, make time for God and be on time for things .....	194
Molly3: Picking up weird life choices from DTS .....	195
Molly3: We have run Faith in Conflict seminars for several years now.....	195
Molly3: I take the object of my judgment and pray, and pray, and pray .....	196
Molly3, Clem3, Esther3, and Steve2: Making mistakes in relationships .....	197
Molly’s Longitudinal Case Study Processes Summary .....	198
Table 6 Molly Case Study Display.....	199
Conclusion .....	200

<b>Chapter Seven.....</b>	<b>203</b>
<b><i>Learning to Become Good Persons: .....</i></b>	<b>203</b>
<b><i>Dave's Case and Others.....</i></b>	<b>203</b>
Introduction .....	203
Learning to Become Good Persons Together .....	203
Dave1: I'm not doing this anymore; I decided there and then to text Allan.....	205
Dave1: I honestly didn't know any of these terms until I got here .....	207
Dave2: I started to say I want to know more of God.....	209
Dave2: God, I'm going to jump in, because why not? .....	211
Dave2: My allegiance to Christ is first and foremost.....	213
David2: I decided to pray the prayer of Daniel 9 and to fast.....	215
Simon2: My dad suffered, and I have suffered, and my children will suffer .....	217
Simon3: You could make them believe in something that is maybe not real .....	218
Dave2: Hammering that into me, into my mindset .....	219
Dave2: I remember just finding real hope .....	220
Dave2: Jesus is a man of peace, and I am a man of peace because I have Jesus .....	222
Dave3: If you want to teach people, you have got to do it first .....	223
Dave's Longitudinal Case Study Processes Summary .....	224
Table 7 Dave Case Study Display.....	224
Identity: Revealing and Reshaping or Constructing and Positioning? .....	226
Narrative-as-Identity .....	228
Conclusion.....	230
<b>Chapter Eight .....</b>	<b>233</b>
<b><i>Reweaving the Arguments for Intentional Moral Formation .....</i></b>	<b>233</b>
<b><i>in Virtuous Learning Communities.....</i></b>	<b>233</b>
Introduction: Recalling and Reweaving the Arguments.....	233
Chapter One: Locating and Justifying the Research .....	233
Chapter Two: Creating a Hybrid Framework for Empirical Moral Inquiry .....	235
Chapter Three: Qualitative Interpretive Inquiry with Individual Case Studies.....	238
Chapter Four: Situating the UofN.....	239
Chapter Five: Connecting DTS Activities with Christian Practices .....	240
Chapter Six: Participants Appropriating Mediational Tools.....	241
Chapter Seven: Mediated Action, Learning Processes and Identity Trajectories .....	242
Practising a Theory of Moral Virtue Formation in Higher Education.....	244
How it Might be Working: Implications for Formation in DTS .....	246
Contributions to Knowledge.....	250
Limitations of Case Study and Research Lenses and Further Research.....	251
Concluding Remarks .....	256
<b>ANNEXES.....</b>	<b>259</b>
<i>Annex One: Semi-Structured Interview Questions.....</i>	<i>259</i>
<i>Annex Two: Codebook.....</i>	<i>261</i>
<i>Annex Three: Sunburst Coding Display.....</i>	<i>271</i>
<i>Annex Four: Tree Map Coding Display .....</i>	<i>273</i>
<i>Annex Five: Research Participation Information Sheet.....</i>	<i>277</i>
<i>Annex Six: Consent Form for Research.....</i>	<i>279</i>
<i>Annex Seven: Stages of Data Collection Timeline.....</i>	<i>281</i>
<i>Annex Eight: Sample Interview.....</i>	<i>283</i>
<i>Annex Nine: Sample Interview Page with All Nodes Coding .....</i>	<i>291</i>
<i>Annex Ten: Footwashing as a Christian Practice .....</i>	<i>299</i>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>301</b>
Primary Sources .....	301
Secondary Sources .....	309

## **FIGURES AND TABLES**

Figure 2.1 Tensions Between External and Internal Goods	40
Figure 2.2 Cultural and Natural Lines of Development	47
Figure 2.3 Becoming Through Enacted Narrative	66
Figure 3.1 Research Strategy Overview	85
Figure 3.2 Analysing the Data	96
Figure 3.3 Drawing and Verifying Conclusions	105
Figure 4.1 Profile of USA Post-secondary Education and CCCU Institutions	117
Figure 4.2: UofN Staff, YWAM Staff, and UofN Instructors	120
Table 3.1 UofN DTS Sites Visited	91
Table 3.2 Participants and their Expertise	94
Table 3.3 Coding Examples ‘Becoming Self-Aware’	98
Table 3.4 Case Study Participant Selection	100
Table 3.5 Type 4 Participant Expertise Communities of Practice	106
Table 4.1 YWAM/UofN Annual Statistics with Ten Year Intervals	118
Table 4.2 UofN Regional Registrar and Transcripts Offices	119
Table 4.3 UofN Seven Colleges/Faculties and International Centres	121
Table 5.1 Table of Christian Practices and DTS Activities	149
Table 5.2 Planes of Analysis	152
Table 5.3 Participants’ Understanding of a Good Learning Community	174
Table 6 Molly Case Study Display	199
Table 7 Dave Case Study Display	224



## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

BERA	British Educational Research Association
CCCU	Council for Christian Colleges and Universities
CHAT	Cultural Historical Activity Theory
CoP	Community of Practice
DTS	Discipleship Training School
ECU	European Christian University
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
IDTSC	International Discipleship Training School Centre
IRA	Irish Republican Army
LPP	Legitimate Peripheral Participation
MKO	More Knowledgeable Other
PACU	Pacific and Asia Christian University
PPCT	Process, Person, Context, Time
SIG	Special Interest Group at BERA
SOE	School of Evangelism
UofN	University of the Nations
USA	United States of America
YWAM	Youth With A Mission
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development





## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction: Moral Virtue Formation in Higher Education Seeking to be Distinctively Christian**

#### **Introduction**

This study seeks to develop a new approach to researching moral formation in connection with higher education. The approach combines theoretical resources from philosophy and sociocultural theory as a fresh framework through which to examine instances of moral formation in the University of the Nations (UofN), an alternative Christian university. The UofN offers a different model to most universities requiring its Discipleship Training School (DTS), where students live communally, as a prerequisite. This offers a distinctive setting in which to examine questions about integrating spiritual and moral formation in higher education. Scholars contest the role of universities in moral virtue formation theoretically, and some trace a history of the secularization of Christian colleges and universities, but few empirically demonstrate how moral formation might be taking place, especially from the student perspective. This thesis addresses that gap by investigating the UofN DTS as it emphasizes growth in character through participation in Christian practices. The research questions focus on participants' understanding of their embodied practices and narratives in a learning community and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtuous character. Moral formation can be explored in many different ways in different theoretical discourses. Building on the work of others, this study researches virtue formation by incorporating sociocultural and activity theory and extending it into moral development. This chapter identifies the gaps in current literature on moral formation in Christian higher education and concludes by presenting the structure of the thesis.

#### **MacIntyre's Wish: A Quite New Kind of Institution**

In his prologue '*After Virtue* after a Quarter of a Century', Alasdair MacIntyre (2007) repeats his earlier call in *After Virtue* (1981) to resist the dominant culture of advanced modernity. MacIntyre's as yet unfulfilled wish is for another St. Benedict who might

initiate ‘a quite new kind of institution, that of the monastery of prayer, learning and labor, in which and around which communities could not only survive, but flourish in a period of social and cultural darkness’ (2007:xvi). This is an idealistic call for an institutional embodiment that allows for flourishing communities to engage in societal renewal. MacIntyre may be overly pessimistic about late modernity and overly optimistic about monastic life, but his wish opens an imaginative space to consider questions such as: How might this ‘new kind of institution’ function? How might people engaging in ‘prayer, learning, and labor’ in communities understand and narrate their participation in these practices? How might this participation transformatively affect those people and their surrounding communities? These questions suggest investigating learning communities engaging in worship, prayer, and practical service. For research purposes, they were narrowed to more specific research questions presented later in this chapter. This research is situated in learning communities which are part of an institution that claims to be a ‘new kind of university’ (Hamilton 2005; Lambert 2013). These communities are connected with others in 160 countries through a vision for university education rooted in practices of Christian discipleship.<sup>1</sup> Arising from the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement (Hocken 1994; Miller 2013; Cochrane 2015), they could be viewed as forerunners of a new ‘twenty-first-century monasticism’, post-modern expressions of the drive to live an alternative communal life in a religious *gemeinschaft*, albeit one which may be more provisional and short term (Keenan 2002:20).

---

<sup>1</sup> Youth With A Mission’s (YWAM) University of the Nations (UofN) operates in 650 locations in 160 countries, providing locally contextualized programs in nearly 100 languages. ‘The UofN is committed to teach and develop men and women spiritually, culturally, intellectually and professionally’. The aim is to nurture students as whole persons, by learning ‘in a discipling environment where growth in character and walking in the ways of the Lord are fundamental’ (YWAM International 2019a). The UofN reports training 16,500 students in residential courses in 2010, of which 11,300 were Discipleship Training School (DTS) students. From 1974 – 2010, 176,501 students were reported as completing the DTS (UofN 2013).

Utopias exist in the realm of ideas, not in embodied institutions. Nevertheless, ‘the function of utopias is to encourage an ironic distance from prevailing conceptions, and to recount the past and envisage the future from a different point of view’ (Webster 2016:31). Perhaps a different point of view drawn from the actual social practices of these learning communities might uncover signs and tools to guide a journey towards goodness, together. Rather than a lament for what was lost in higher education, or a utopian discourse on what ought to be everywhere, this thesis looks at participants learning in particular communities of actual practice. The wish for higher education that unites ‘young and old in the imaginative consideration of learning’ (Whitehead 1932:139) is extended to include education that offers people and communities practical means to change towards the good. This stance welcomes signs of hope for how things could be different and current means for collaborative action to move towards a sought after future. In order to envisage a possible future and set this thesis within a research discourse drawn from existing studies, I will recount a view of the past and present regarding the relationship of higher education institutions and religion in moral formation.

### **University and Church as Co-labourers**

In Europe and the USA, the earliest universities had their roots in the church and monastic movements with connections continuing into the twentieth century (Marsden 1994; Rothblatt 1997; Burtchaell 1998; Grendler 2017). The institution of the university was expected to play a shared role with ecclesiastical institutions in the moral formation of ‘virtuous citizens’ (Marsden 1994:51). However, in their extensive survey of three decades of research in US institutions on *How College Affects Students*, Pascarella & Terenzini note how the modern ‘fragmentation of knowledge’ and the rise of diverse disciplines have moved the focus away from developing character in higher education (2005:345). The aims of the elite universities have evolved. Where Harvard’s motto was

once *Veritas pro Christo et Ecclesia*, the first word only now suffices (Kendrick 2006).<sup>2</sup>

As Marsden notes, established American universities just quietly omitted their earlier aims to pursue ‘the ethics of Jesus’ (1994:422).<sup>3</sup> Spanning several more centuries, the ancient aim of fostering ‘godliness and good learning’ in the British education systems and the colleges at Oxford and Cambridge ebbed and flowed. Renewed as a nineteenth-century Victorian ideal, the pursuit of godliness was eventually dropped (Newsome 1961).<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, traces of these aims remain etched in architecture, a lingering institutional memory. The concern to foster good character continues to re-emerge.

### **Moral Education at University Contested**

Even those who champion secular universities lament the preoccupation of educational institutions with instrumental economic ends (Bok 2010) and propose alternatives such as an ‘ecological university’ exercising responsibility towards ‘personal and social well-being as much as physical and material well-being’ (Barnett 2011:454). Not all are seeking a broader moral responsibility. For example, Stanley Fish declares that as producers and dispensers of ‘bodies of knowledge’ and ‘analytical skills’ to individual

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<sup>2</sup> Harvard University, founded as New College in 1636, was established to train Christian ministers. Harvard’s ‘Rules and Precepts’, adopted ten years later, stated:

2. Let every Student be plainly instructed, and earnestly pressed to consider well, the maine end of his life and studies is, to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life (John 17:3) and therefore to lay Christ in the bottome, as the only foundation of all sound knowledge and Learning. And seeing the Lord only giveth wisdom, Let every one seriously set himself by prayer in secret to seeke it of him (Prov. 2:3).

3. Every one shall so exercise himselfe in reading the Scriptures twice a day, that he shall be ready to give such an account of his proficiency therein, both in Theoreticall observations of Language and Logick, and in practical and spiritual truths, as his Tutor shall require, according to his ability; seeing the entrance of the word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple (Psalm 119:130). ... Interestingly, the top two books on the shield are face up while the bottom book is face down. This symbolizes the limits of reason, and the need for God’s revelation (original spelling and references retained, Harvard GSAS 2019). Additional information is available in ‘Harvard Ironies’ (Roberts 2010).]

<sup>3</sup> As late as 1924, Duke University’s aim continued to be to ‘assert a faith in the eternal union of knowledge and religion as set forth in the teachings and character of Jesus Christ, the Son of God’ (Marsden 1994:422).

<sup>4</sup> Perhaps this is a good thing because the ‘form of godliness’ envisioned also had to do with privileging certain religious groups (Anglicans) and excluding others, including non-conformists, Catholics, and Jews. It should not be assumed that the aims of godliness were necessarily realized. Rothblatt (1997) quotes John Henry Newman’s comment in 1817 “‘if anyone should ask me what qualifications were necessary for Trinity College, I should say there was only one, Drink, drink, drink” (footnote 75 Newman *Autobiographical Writings*, p. 32)’ (1997:138).

consumers, universities efficiently perform a distinct service in the market (2008:18). Fish contends that academics should just do their job and leave the task of moral education to others.<sup>5</sup> However, a very different tack is taken by educators with a re-invigorated emphasis on moral, civic, and in some cases spiritual goals in education, albeit in a pluralistic world of contending values (see Boyer 1990; Arthur 2005; 2009; Bok 2010; Carr 2011; Bamber 2016; Glanzer et al. 2017). Nevertheless, the trope of the market has come to dominate higher education, and market metaphors are particularly inhospitable soil for the formation of particular virtues such as compassion and humility. If such virtues are to flourish, they require more than cognitive analytical skills. They also require embodied practices involving hospitality and solidarity with the poor in pursuit of goods and ends other than market efficiency.

Scholars often discuss university as a concept. One influential thinker about the university and its relationship to ecclesiastical structures is John Henry Newman. In 1852 he envisioned the university as ‘idea’ and not as ‘institution’ (Pelikan 1992:192), constraining its role to pursuing an intellectual culture that connects disciplines and respects their boundaries with ‘the philosophy of an imperial intellect’ (Newman 1976:371).

University ... contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture; here it may leave its scholars, and it has done its work when it has done as much as this (Newman 1996:92).

For Newman, university deals with intellectual virtues and the life of the mind, not moral education. University, in its essence, has ‘no pastoral or catechetic function’ (Marchetto 2015:211). Newman warned of the dangers of equating Christianity with ‘religious sentiment and practical morality’ (Marsden 1994:410), but it should be noted that his warning is in the context of mid-nineteenth-century Victorian morality. Instead

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<sup>5</sup> In his response to Yale College’s purpose statement, Fish writes: ‘I’m all for moral, civic and creative capacities, but I’m not sure that there is much I or anyone else could do as a teacher to develop them.’ (2008:11)

of locating Christianity in the subjective experience of the individual or in doing social good, Newman argued for theology to be at the heart of a Catholic University in Dublin. Many authors (Holmes 1987; Pelikan 1992; Rothblatt 1997; Litfin 2004; D’Costa 2005; Higton 2012a; Ream & Glanzer 2013) engage with Newman’s *The Idea of a University*. This thesis need not cover this well-trod ground, except to indicate the repeated problem of separating ideas and the mind from embodied social practices.

This problem will be addressed in Chapter Two. After entering the MacIntyrean critique in *After Virtue* and exploring the roots of virtue ethics, additional theoretical resources will offer means to consider mind taking place in activity and emerging through social formation. MacIntyre introduced an integrated teleological conceptual framework for developing virtue requiring practices, narratives, communities, institutions, and a tradition in *After Virtue* in 1981 (2007:186–187). In a later book, *Dependent Rational Animals*, he reminds us that virtues such as *phronesis* (practical wisdom) are never acquired through theoretical instruction, but through shared practices and activities (MacIntyre 1999:135–136). Somehow, he fails to offer any alternative practices in *God, Philosophy, Universities* (2009), focusing instead on addressing his neglect of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic contributions to virtue in response to his critics. MacIntyre (2009) outlines his vision for the university, calling for theistic philosophy to re-integrate the disciplines in a Catholic university. He broadly adopts John Henry Newman’s earlier argument. Aims and intentions towards moral education and integration in universities continue to be contested theoretically, but few have attempted to demonstrate how they might take place in practice. We shall see that some higher education institutions that once sought to foster a distinctively Christian identity and ecclesial connections no longer do so.

## **Tracing a History of Secularization**

Several scholars have traced a history of secularization of Christian higher education (Bebbington 1992; Marsden 1994; Burtchaell 1998; D’Costa 2005; Arthur 2006). In the USA, many Christian colleges and universities have expanded, but Burtchaell (1998) provides a historical analysis of how seventeen colleges and universities founded by ecclesial bodies disengaged from their church moorings and religious identities. He argues that this process of detachment from denominational roots leads to an eventual loss of Christian identity (Burtchaell 1998:835–38). More recent empirical studies at evangelical Christian colleges in the USA point towards faculty prioritising broader Christian identity over particular institutional denominational affiliation (Rine et al. 2013:262), and indicate that students have neutral views towards the denomination of their institution and are less likely to be affiliated to that denomination than fifteen years previously (Davignon et al. 2013:328). These processes of secularization and the loss of denominational identity may lead to an impoverishment of practices and theological language and result in the loss of flourishing for higher education which is distinctively Christian (Glanzer & Ream 2009).

In England, fourteen Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) form part of the Cathedrals Group with a history of church-related teacher training colleges. Most are now not easily distinguishable from secular universities by visiting their websites and have neither a ‘Christian emphasis in the curriculum’ nor a predominantly Christian staff or student body (Wooldridge & Newcomb 2011:19). The Cathedral Group’s distinctiveness comes in a more generic form, being ‘the only grouping which is overtly based on shared ethical beliefs and values’ (Wooldridge & Newcomb 2011:1). Wooldridge and Newcombe (2011:15) found that ‘many interviewees [senior staff and chairs of the governing bodies] were careful to stress that they wanted to be perceived in line with other secular institutions, rather than aligning too closely with the Christian



tradition'. Their report emphasizes opportunities for distinctiveness, but virtually none which are distinctively Christian.

Universities depend on state funding, and bureaucratic pressure and public opinion to accommodate all students regardless of religious faith discourage any emphasis on Christian particularity. Glanzer's research in 2008 indicated that Canterbury Christ Church University had a value to 'continue to sustain our life and work through prayer and worship' (2008:170), but this value no longer exists on their website in 2019 (Canterbury Christ Church University 2019). Liverpool Hope University was the only other institution Glanzer found which mentioned 'Christian worship' in its mission and values in 2008. Liverpool Hope University established in July 2005, identifies itself as 'Europe's only ecumenical university foundation' and 'welcomes all who seek a sound higher education'. Remaining 'faithful to its Christian moorings' is expressed in aspiring 'to be a welcoming, hospitable and caring community', but there is no longer any mention of worship (Liverpool Hope University 2019). One vice-chancellor observed that any distinction like 'a kind of 21<sup>st</sup> century answer to monasticism' would not be found at any of the universities in England with church foundations (Glanzer 2008:178). With a few exceptions such as D'Costa (2005), British Christian scholars rarely suggest creating new overtly Christian universities, and instead 'support the need for a faithful Christian remnant to exist in secularised English institutions' (Glanzer 2008:178). There is a large body of literature on the secularization of universities, but engaging in this discourse is not the focus of this thesis. The secularizing trend is recognized and importantly for this thesis indicates the improbability of finding established state-funded universities which are institutions fostering communities of worship, 'prayer, learning and labor' (MacIntyre 2007:xvi). In Chapter Four, we will learn in greater detail how the UofN claims to sustain such communities in a new kind of university.

## **D’Costa’s Argument for Theology and the Church at the Heart of Education**

If a new kind of university is called for, how might it be distinctively Christian? Gavin D’Costa (2005) traces the secularization of British universities and argues that theology and the church must be at the heart of education and a Christian university.<sup>6</sup> He follows MacIntyrean lines of argument for a Catholic university (D’Costa 2005:36) but suggests that achieving an ecumenical Christian university might be more likely, probably with the recent founding of Liverpool Hope University in mind. The problem, as he sees it, is that Christian universities, in general, demonstrate ‘little real institutional evidence of what makes the university Christian’ (D’Costa 2005:75). He observes almost no evidence of Christian vision influencing the academic disciplines and no holistic integration of the disciplines with theology or philosophy. In these same institutions, he claims theology itself has been secularized, and public theology appears very similar to religious studies. Finally, he identifies ‘staunch critics’ of this secularization process and their diverse counter-strategies. These strategies include reforming theology in the university, reconnecting fragmented and isolated disciplines, opening space for ‘worship and religious practice’, and calls for new kinds of universities (D’Costa 2005:76). D’Costa welcomes all these counter-strategies and calls for ‘a postliberal plurality of universities with differing traditions of enquiry, and within such institutions, the renewal of tradition-specific ecclesial forms of theological enquiry’ (2005:144). He views the theologian’s task as both intellectual and practical. In terms of the practical, D’Costa turns to ‘traditions of prayer, saints’ days, liturgical feasts, and the practice of

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<sup>6</sup> Goodlad traces similar historical patterns in the demise of English church colleges to those found by Burtchaell in American ones. The five factors are:

(1) reductions in staff and students from a particular denomination thereby changing the nature of the institution; (2) a movement from the inculcation of religious beliefs and practices toward academic theology, and eventually toward religious studies so that the curriculum becomes detached from the institution’s Christian aims; (3) compulsory worship giving way to optional worship, thereby changing the nature of communal unity; (4) the lifting of restrictions on student behaviour so that “moral” and “religious” forms of life become independent of intellectual activity; and, finally, (5) a move from clergy or religious to lay presidents (principals or rectors) (D’Costa 2005:65).

charity and virtue as some of the prerequisite skills necessary for the university theologian' (2005:144). For example, he urges that theologians must 'pray for release from exile' in Babylon (referring to religious studies) (D'Costa 2005:112–44).

D'Costa argues not only that the Church should be central in the Christian university, but that a Catholic university would serve the Church and society as it 'fosters the cultural and intellectual life of nations and trains the intelligentsia of the ecclesia' (2005:215). Here we may encounter a longing to return to the 'metaphysical university' with availability to a select minority, possibly even social stratification for the cognitively elite (Barnett 2011:441–42). There is an assumption that 'Christian culture and civilization are at stake' (D'Costa 2005:215), and it is the responsibility of

churches in North America and England to take up this challenge, to bring the light of God to shine through the portals of the university, to allow for a revitalization of Christian culture so that God may be given glory and the common good thereby served (D'Costa 2005:218).

Many of D'Costa's arguments set the stage for this thesis. In particular, he engages with MacIntyre to construct his case. This substantiates his argument for a 'postliberal plurality of universities with differing traditions' with alternative universities encouraged alongside the modern liberal university (D'Costa 2005:5). He also draws attention to prayer and other Christian practices in the life of the university theologian. These practices are not, however, brought into practical view for an entire faculty or student body of a Christian university. D'Costa seems to have a vision that the church can rescue Christendom, and this sits uncomfortably with MacIntyre's analysis of late modernity. Theology, as a means to unity in Christendom, has often been accompanied by the exercise of state power and ecclesiastical privilege. Theology, as an intellectual task, might prove as likely to create fragmentation or disunity as the desired unity at the heart of the university through vigorous argumentation. Admittedly D'Costa argues that power should be 'replaced by love, understood as service to the powerless' (2005:190), and he is calling on the Church, not the state, to take up her responsibilities. D'Costa opens space for this thesis to consider how a practical theology might be embodied, not

10

just in the life of university theologians training intelligentsia for the Church, but in a whole community of Christian higher education.

### **Higton's Argument for a University of Intellectual Virtue**

In contrast to D'Costa's call for an institutional plurality of distinctively Christian universities alongside modern liberal universities, Mike Higton seeks accommodation of religious and non-religious plurality within the secular university. Higton (2012a) calls for a university of virtue and sociability for the common good. For Higton, higher education offers an apprenticeship in intellectual virtue but does not seek to form moral virtue alongside intellectual virtue. This argument needs to be looked at more closely, because it may invalidate the claim of this thesis that moral virtue formation in higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian should be investigated. Reasoning is, in its own right, a virtuous discipline. Higton desires multiple theologies and philosophies of education, both religious and non-religious, where the rules or procedures governing engagement are 'softly secular' (2012b:7). He argues not for a distinctively Christian way of being in an academic community, but for a celebration of the '*multiple* rootedness of our *shared* understandings of intellectual virtue' (Higton 2012b:5, italics in original). Higher education provides an induction into 'a reasoning community united by forms of virtuous intellectual exchange', for which these diverse theologies and philosophies may provide many different 'whys' (Higton 2012b:9). Finally, universities should pursue their intellectual exchange for the common good of society.

Higton presents an Anglican 'why', drawing from Christian beliefs and practices, for his account of the shared rules of academic engagement. He provides a helpful survey of contemporary Christian theologians and their discourses about the university. Unlike some critics of the secular university, Higton explicitly states he is 'not looking to re-found the Christian university, but to help secular and religiously plural

universities take seriously their secular and religiously plural nature' (2012a:250). There is an apparent tension, if not disjunction in his argument, which Higton begins to acknowledge, but fails to resolve. Speaking as an Anglican theologian at Durham University, Higton closes his book claiming that

to the extent that the learning taking place in the university is real learning, it is learning that remains incomplete without worship and discipleship – learning that would be made more fully itself were it to be united to worship and discipleship (2012a:256).

Real learning in Higton's tradition means 'being invited as disciples to know God and the fulfilment that God has for God's creatures' (Higton 2012a:6). He is

bound to see learning – *all* learning worthy of the name – as a form of discipleship, and to see at its heart a form of participation in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ by the power of the Spirit: a breaking and remaking of sense inseparable from formation in the various fruits of the Spirit (Higton 2012a:171, italics in original).

Holding to this theology of learning, Higton's tension is whether he can fulfil his vocation as a theologian and contribute to changes towards the good in the secular university. He argues that he can by enabling learning as an apprenticeship in intellectual virtues (Higton 2012a:195–96), developing a community of 'free exchange and mutual compunction' (Higton 2012a:212), and contributing to the common good through enhancing wisdom and the quality of public discourse (Higton 2012a:237–39). These are some of the 'forms' of discipleship and participation and formation to which he sees himself contributing.

Nevertheless, Higton explicitly states that he is not interested in 'virtue as an accompaniment to strictly intellectual formation' such as might be attempted by an educational institution committed to 'forming the whole person' through moral training (2012a:176). He replaces the whole of life discipleship with formation in intellectual virtues. He then recognizes that his vocation in the secular university cannot be in forming disciples 'to intentional devotion to Christ' (Higton 2012a:195), so as not to transgress 'properly' imposed institutional boundaries. In his chapter 'The Sociable University', Higton claims: 'University education is, fundamentally, a matter of a certain kind of *socialization*—a fact that once again makes it harder to draw sharp lines

12

between the intellectual formation of students and their moral formation' (2012a:204, italics in original). Higton's tension with his theological vocation in the secular university is openly confessed, and he admits that his justification risks self-deception (2012a:253). If university education is fundamentally a kind of socialization, on what basis should moral formation be excluded, or intentional aims be disallowed? If his theology of learning is fundamentally discipleship and participation in ecclesial fellowship with the triune God, 'inseparable from formation in the various fruits of the Spirit' (Higton 2012a:171), must he accept only the lesser forms available within the rules governing engagement in the secular university? Worship and discipleship are declared 'the *most* fitting accompaniments' to university life (Higton 2012a:256, italics in original), and for the Christian are these not central to all of life? Why should worship and discipleship be peripheral options or excluded from the aims and practice of higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian? I am sympathetic to Higton's position as a theologian in an elite British secular university and affirm that vocations will be distinctively Christian in a wide variety of expressions and contexts. His arguments identify the need to explore Christian practices, such as worship and discipleship, and consider how they might be not only optional peripheral accompaniments but central to the formation of virtue in Christian education. Separating intellectual formation from moral formation in order to maintain space for religious and non-religious plurality within the secular university may result in fragmentation and the loss of shared understanding necessary for the virtuous reasoning community that Higton desires. Whether Higton is interested in virtue as an accompaniment to intellectual formation or not, or whether an educational institution aims towards moral formation or denies this aim, this thesis agrees with Higton that university education fundamentally engages in socialization.

## **Research Questions for Moral Formation in the UofN DTS**

If higher education is a form of socialization, then both intellectual and moral formation will be occurring. Stanley Hauerwas claims that ‘all education, whether acknowledged or not, is moral formation’ (2007:46). This statement is not to be taken to mean that all education is morally good. Education might form clever crooks. Research suggests that a concept of moral community can be applied to higher education and indicates that institutional influences on students’ religious participation, belief, and practice are varied (Hill 2009; Davignon & Thomson 2015; Thomson & Davignon 2017). If education institutions pursue different ends, these would require alternative ways of living, relating, and learning. These alternative sets of practices and narratives result from different shared moral orders and moral communities necessary to foster different moral formations (Smith 2003:22). To learn to love the poor while at university, you would need to live with the poor and those who love the poor (Hauerwas 2007:200). In this sense, resisting the dominant culture of late modernity would require a different kind of university institution rooted in moral communities which offer practices and narratives to provide a moral counter-formation. This consideration led to researching the DTS as a potentially virtuous learning community within the UofN and investigating participant understanding.

The overarching research question was:

How do participants (students, staff, and leaders) in the University of the Nations Discipleship Training School (UofN DTS) understand the interaction of their embodied practices and narratives, and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtue formation?

The specific research sub-questions were:

1. How might DTS activities, which participants narrate as impactful, be linked to Christian practices?

2. How do DTS participants understand a good learning community?
3. How do participants appropriate mediational tools which may enable virtues to form?
4. How do participants' learning processes and identity trajectories interact and change through the DTS?

The focus of the investigation came to be how participants understood the activities of the UofN DTS impacted them. The focus meant that other aspects, such as student experience of UofN courses in academic disciplines, were not part of this study. This thesis agrees with Hauerwas that all forms of education contribute to moral formation of one type or another, but focuses on the DTS as the UofN prerequisite. Several authors in the next sections suggest how higher education can be reimagined and reintegrated.

### **Restoring the Soul of the University through Reimagining**

Glanzer, Alleman, and Ream's (2017) work both delves into historical research on the foundations of the university in Europe and America and presents a sweeping vision of how contemporary Christian education can be reconnected and restored with theological imagination. Drawing on the work of Smith and Felch (2016), the authors use several metaphors, such as the building and the body, to creatively imagine both the historical and contemporary condition of the institutions. In part one, they use the metaphor of the university as a building. They depict Hugh of St Victor in the twelfth century as creating an original blueprint for the university which emerged in the next century. Hugh sought to 'combine the best of the monastery with the best of contemporary learning to transform the world' (Glanzer et al. 2017:28). Hugh's vision integrated theology, friendship with God and monastic practices and virtues such as humility. Nevertheless, Hugh's creation of 'a separate academic room' for theology, led to theology as 'the pinnacle of education', but removed it from the curricular foundations (Glanzer et al. 2017:37). The 'cracked pinnacle' refers to the historical emphasis on



theology as the ‘queen of the sciences’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:40), but the separation of theology, drawing from revelation, and philosophy, drawing from nature, eventually led to its collapse.

Glanzer et al. (2017) adopt Kerr’s prescient analysis in 1963 of the modern university as a ‘multiversity’ (2001) and are concerned about fragmentation in the university. Despite the contemporary global success of America’s universities, they consider how the ‘souls’ of these and other universities have become severely fragmented and in need of repair. This idea of the ‘soul’ refers to the central ‘identity, story, and mission’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:13) when viewing an institution through the metaphor of a living organism or body. The authors propose a vision to restore a more unified ‘soul’ to universities, the souls of the professors, the curriculum, the students, and the ‘chief fragmentation officers’ – the leaders and administrators in these institutions. The cure prescribed is ‘reimagining’. From a distinctively Christian perspective, theology is the ‘lifeblood’ of this soul repair through reimagination. A ‘theological way of thinking and living ... in the light of God and God’s story ... as God’s image bearers’ serves not only the academic vocation but is ‘unifying and transformative’ for the curriculum (Glanzer et al. 2017:222). Creating a ‘greenhouse community’ for students enables knowing God ‘in order to understand what it means to be a fully developed human being’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:222).

Finally, from a perspective of exile, Christian administrators can ‘reimagine the university as an extension of God’s kingdom’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:223). Living in exile recognizes the loss of ecclesiastical domination of culture. Curiously, for the authors, competence in Christian higher education requires ‘jumping through the hoops of accreditation, federal policy, and marketplace credibility that are *required to establish legitimacy*’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:315, italics added). The authors suggest that Christian administrators do nearly the same things secular administrators do. If this is true, then

their formation is likely to be similar, but the authors believe Christian administrators can be distinctively different. Despite administrative acquiescence to procedural conformity to ‘establish legitimacy’, the authors argue for a countercultural stance involving ‘critique of the dominant ideology’, ‘public processing of pain’ including confession and lament regarding injustice, and ‘the release of a new social imagination’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:314–17). It would be helpful to read real examples of administrators taking collaborative action from a countercultural perspective of exile, even while retaining ‘marketplace credibility’ and procedural conformity.

Their two-fold audience includes both Christians in multiversities and those seeking to develop coherent faith-based universities. For Christian universities to prosper, they declare the ‘need to think in radical new ways about the practices of the contemporary university’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:12). These practices, in a story-formed Christian community, are to include ‘the liberating arts of worship, confession, theological reflection, mutual love, and humble service’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:11). If these alternative liberating practices are not only peripheral to the dominant culture but also mostly peripheral to the life of the Christian institution of higher education, it is perhaps wishful to believe that anything other than ‘thinking’ will be different. In ‘Reimagining the Cocurricular’, it is suggested that rather than a protected bubble, Christian universities should produce a ‘greenhouse community’ for students to grow (Glanzer et al. 2017:277). Biblical examples such as Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem are used. Heroes are suggested such as a devoted husband caring for a wife with severe burns resulting from the attack on the World Trade Towers on 9/11 and the example of Bonhoeffer’s (1954) *Life Together*. The one example of a practice of the liberating arts in a faith-based university was an effort to hold a prayer meeting for victims of the Nepali earthquake. The authors struggle to present examples of practical theology in the university. They replicate a table of worship practices from Hauerwas

and Wells, 'Christian Ethics as Informed Prayer', but rather than giving examples of these embodied practices, the quotations from professors involve 'learning to speak theologically' and teaching students for a broader understanding (Glanzer et al. 2017:240–41). The lack of empirical accounts of Christian practices taking place in higher education perpetuates a gap in the literature. Almost without exception, accounts offer theoretical discussions and a reimagination unsupported by research in practices.

In common with this thesis, the authors acknowledge the contributions to their thinking and reimagining from Alasdair MacIntyre, Etienne Wenger, James K A Smith, and David I Smith (Glanzer et al. 2017:317) as well as Stanley Hauerwas and other theologians. Smith and Felch give some examples of education informed by Christian practices such as a teacher who engaged student leaders in singing together as part of a service-learning programme (2016:82). They imagine a teacher whose patterns of action allow for a shared practice of Sabbath with her students (Smith & Felch 2016:85). Nevertheless, thick accounts of experiences of embodied Christian practices in higher education are rare. Another underexplored area addressed in this thesis is how the interaction of embodied practices and narratives may be investigated. For example, how does the 'release of a new social imagination' change or shape the embodied practices in Christian higher education? Alternatively, is it more accurate to describe the direction of change in reverse? How do differently embodied practices, such as the 'liberating arts', carry understanding and contribute to new ways of imagining and narrating a life of human flourishing? Do new ways of understanding and knowing emerge from different practices and narratives? This thesis will not focus on faculty or administrators or curriculum but specifically on the participants', particularly students', understandings of the interaction of their embodied practices and narratives in the DTS that may lead to change. This currently largely unexplored area requires a philosophical, theological anthropology to undergird research.

## **Educating Desiring, Imaginative Animals**

In *Desiring the Kingdom*, James Smith (2009) provocatively presents a philosophical theology of Christian education as a formative process of shaping human desires. He argues that for far too long, we have approached Christian higher education by thinking and writing about *ideas*. These might be ideas about the relationship between the university and the church, ideas about integrating faith and learning, or ideas about developing a biblical worldview and conflicts with other worldviews. Instead of viewing persons primarily as thinkers or even believers, Smith argues that they are primordially *lovers* (2009:41, italics added). With a quick tour of philosophical anthropology, Smith suggests that Cartesian dualism and an overemphasis on the human person as primarily ‘thinker’ was absorbed into Protestant Christianity. Smith protests that a human person is much more than ‘a brain on a stick’ (Lewis 2006:100).

The Reformed tradition recognizes the contested nature of ‘rational thinking’ due to different ‘worldviews’ governing and conditioning perception and built on a set of beliefs. A worldview (way of seeing the world) is ‘based on prior faith or trust’, which can be ‘pre-rational or supra-rational’ (Smith 2009:43).<sup>7</sup> The summary statement, ‘I believe in order to understand’ (Smith 2009:43), views the person primarily as believer. Smith acknowledges that the Reformed critique carves out space for a specifically ‘Christian’ education by questioning the supposed objectivity of secular reason in the public sphere, but argues that it merely moves the focus from ideas to the beliefs that undergird those ideas. The view of the human person as believer is still individualistic and dualistic. Beliefs often are related to developing Christian perspectives in the mind but have little to do with embodied practices in the church community. Smith argues that human-as-thinker and human-as-believer perpetuate a reductionistic account.

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<sup>7</sup> References are made to Reformed philosophers including Alvin Plantinga, Nicholas Wolterstorff, and Herman Dooyeweerd, and also to sociologist Christian Smith and his work in describing human persons as moral, believing animals who live from beliefs in different metanarratives.

For a fuller account of the human person, Smith turns to Augustinian theology, presenting ‘human persons as embodied agents of desire or love’, humans-as-lovers (2009:47).<sup>8</sup> The summary statement is: ‘I am what I love’ (Smith 2009:46). Humans are ‘intentional beings who first and foremost (and ultimately) intend the world in the mode of *love*’ (Smith 2009:50, italics in original). Our desires are drawn towards a *telos* – the imagined visions of the good life that capture our hearts – even as habits navigate our aim towards that *telos*. Desires can also be misdirected. In Smith’s model, which he names ‘homo liturgicus’, the direction of intentions is adjusted by habits, which ‘constitute the fulcrum of our desire’ (2009:56). Smith acknowledges that even philosophers are ‘desiring, imaginative, noncognitive animals’<sup>9</sup>, for the most part. ‘Our desire for the kingdom is inscribed in our dispositions and habits and functions quite apart from our conscious reflection’ (Smith 2009:56). These habits are embedded in bodily communal practices and rituals which form the loves or desires of our hearts or guts (*kardia*).

Smith argues that advertising and media executives more profoundly understand human persons than do Christian educators. They traffic in images and stories and legends to create pictures of the good life drawing us in with affective embodied means, masterfully forming our ‘adaptive unconscious’ (Smith 2009:58). Before presenting Charles Taylor’s concept of ‘social imaginaries’ as preferable to the concept of ‘worldviews’ for Christian education, Smith summarizes:

Human persons are intentional creatures whose fundamental way of “intending” the world is love or desire. This love or desire – which is unconscious or noncognitive – is always aimed at some vision of the good life, some particular articulation of the kingdom. What primes us to be so oriented – and act accordingly – is a set of habits or dispositions that are formed in us through affective, bodily means, especially bodily practices, routines, or rituals that grab hold of our hearts through our imagination, which is closely linked to our bodily senses (2009:62–63).

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<sup>8</sup> James Smith also draws on the phenomenology of Husserl and Heidegger and makes the shift from forming worldviews to the social imaginaries of Charles Taylor.

<sup>9</sup> James Smith’s ‘desiring, imaginative animals’ traces back to Christian Smith’s (2003) *Moral, Believing Animals* which is itself a play on Alasdair MacIntyre’s (1999) *Dependent, Rational Animals*.

Essentially Smith is arguing that Taylor's 'social imaginary' represents a more profound way that ordinary people 'imagine' and navigate their social world. It is different from 'worldview', which refers more to disengaged intellectual schemes used when people think about the world. The 'social imaginary' precedes 'thinking about' and is carried in stories, images, and legends, but also a common understanding implicit in bodily practice and social relations (Taylor 2007:171–72). If practice precedes understanding as Smith suggests, the Christian educator will pay much more attention to specifically Christian communal practices such as those constituting worship and prayer. Christian formation is 'less about erecting an edifice of Christian knowledge' and more about 'developing a Christian know-how that intuitively "understands" the world' through participation in Christian practices (Smith 2009:68).

Thick practices and 'rituals of ultimate concern' can be likened to liturgies, whether secular or religious, which shape our identities and desires (Smith 2009:86–7). Smith offers a cultural exegesis of liturgies of the shopping mall as consumerist worship, athletic stadium ceremonies as practices of transcendent allegiance to the school and nation producing a willingness to make 'the ultimate sacrifice', and the university with its rituals such as Freshers' Week as tribal initiation into becoming 'productive, successful consumers who will be leaders in society' (2009:116). Smith agrees with Hauerwas that all education is moral formation. Moreover, his move to exegete secular liturgies indicates how formation is occurring through all areas of life not just in intentional Christian formation, which is sometimes viewed with suspicion as a form of indoctrination. Formation can also be a de-formation which requires a counter-formation depending on the vision of the good life pursued.

The liturgy of worship is offered as a practice, but it is difficult to see how a 90-minute church service might be sufficient to provide a thorough counter-formation to Smith's secular liturgies occurring daily. In his final chapter, Smith suggests the need

for a ‘new monasticism for the university’ and that ‘the Christian university should contribute to the formation of radical disciples of Jesus’ (2009:221). He begins to suggest practical ways in which teaching and learning might draw on Christian practices and improvise and extend them in the university classroom, for a ‘liturgically informed pedagogy’ (Smith 2009:228). Smith’s provocative prose brings us tantalizingly close to addressing the questions of this thesis. Along with Smith and others, this thesis argues that higher education is not solely about developing intellectual virtues. While the emphasis on cultivating moral virtues and loves aimed towards the good could risk downplaying the importance of intellectual virtues, the lack of scholarly research on the former provides a further rationale for this investigation. The philosophical anthropology presented is that human beings are much more than rational or believing animals, but that they are also dependent, moral, and imagining, desiring animals. Valuing and enabling immersive participation in multiple Christian practices to offer a counter-formation of desire towards the good in the learning community could prove vital for higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian.

### **Experimenting with Pedagogical Adaptations of Christian Practices**

Within the discourse of Christian higher education, there has been great emphasis on integrating faith and learning. This emphasis has tended to focus on the cognitive content of the Christian faith and its integration within or between various academic disciplines and sometimes in the mind of the Christian scholar (Glanzer & Ream 2009:182–83).<sup>10</sup> North American literature on the nature of the Christian university has focused almost entirely on processes of secularization and intellectual positioning such

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<sup>10</sup> Two examples of this emphasis of integration in the scholar are ‘Developing a Christian Mind’ set up to provide ‘space for postgraduate students, post-docs and faculty to consider how they integrate their Christian faith and their academic life’ in Oxford (DCM at Oxford 2015), and ‘Forming a Christian Mind’ (FACM) in Cambridge, which ‘explores how Christian faith interacts with personal and academic development’ and ‘aims to help postgraduates and post-docs to develop their capacity to think biblically about their discipline and address the tensions between secular and Christian perspectives on their subject’ (Jubilee Centre 2015).

as in the history of Western ideas, (see as examples Marsden 1994; Litfin 2004; Poe 2004). A survey of 9,028 journal articles published from 1970 to 2010 in 26 North American Christian and interfaith journals demonstrates that until very recently scant attention has been paid to pedagogical adaptations of explicitly Christian practices in teaching and learning (Smith et al. 2014). Glanzer and Ream (2009) did a document survey of 156 American Christian higher education institutions to consider approaches to moral education. They visited nine institutions, interviewed administrators, and present brief case studies of two institutions (Calvin College and Eastern Mennonite University) as contemporary exemplars of a ‘more comprehensive approach to moral education’ in a particular theological tradition (Glanzer & Ream 2009:131–157).

A recent survey of 2,309 faculty at 48 member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU) indicated that 40% consider that their theological tradition has no influence on their teaching methods and 20% responded ‘Don’t know’ (Alleman et al. 2016:108; Smith 2017a). Notable exceptions to the majority are accounts of several university professors’ creative experiments to adapt their pedagogical strategies by incorporating Christian practices into university courses in *Teaching and Christian Practices* (2011), edited by David I Smith and James K A Smith. This book emerged out of Calvin College’s Kuyers Institute for Christian Teaching and Learning which undertook a three-year project funded by the Valparaiso Project on the Education and Formation of People in Faith (Smith & Smith 2011:19). It draws on the practical theology of Christian practices in the work of Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra (Dykstra & Bass 2002; Dykstra 2003; 2005; Bass & Dykstra 2008; Bass 2010). All of these authors and many others in the discourse on distinctively Christian higher education acknowledge a debt to Alasdair MacIntyre as a philosopher and his teleological account of practices, communities, narrative, and virtues in a moral tradition. Also, various sociologists such as Pierre Bourdieu and educational theorists



such as Etienne Wenger are used by Smith and Smith (2011) to reflect on practice and learning in ‘communities of practice’. The editors’ succinct introduction presents the philosophy, sociology, and theology undergirding their work. An apparent gap in the literature shows in the lack of accounts of Christian practices taking place in higher education. This thesis draws from many of the same sources and depends upon a very similar theoretical framework, but with two significant differences.

First, the focus is on participants’ understanding of their embodied practices and narratives and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtuous character. The research primarily elicits the student’s understanding rather than the teacher’s understanding. David Smith (2011) hints at the need for this in his final chapter ‘Recruiting Students’ Imaginations: Prospects and Pitfalls’. A recurring question from educators was ‘Did the students get it?’ Perhaps they were indifferent or resentful and resistant (Smith & Smith 2011:211). There has continued to be little scholarly attention to Christian pedagogical practices such as how faith informs the process of teaching (Smith 2018). There has been even less attention to the student experience of Christian practices in the process of learning. The focus of this thesis is specifically on learning, not teaching, and how participants understand their own learning, virtue formation, and identity development in the context of the activities of the DTS community. While the integration of Christian practices in teaching is beginning to be investigated, students’ understanding of Christian practices in learning communities remains mostly unexplored in research.

Second, in order to investigate participants’ understanding, additional sociocultural theories from Lev Vygotsky and James Wertsch will be used to deepen and extend the analysis in conversation with MacIntyre and Lave and Wenger. This will enable ‘mind’ to be explored in activity, providing further theoretical and methodological resources. Instead of viewing the integration of cognitive knowledge in

the mind, the view is towards how participants appropriate mediational signs and tools in activities, in human action. The type of understanding investigated is not primarily intellectual, but a know-how, a means of navigating in the world towards desired ends. This understanding is also emotionally freighted as learning is closely intertwined with identity development.

These notable distinctions promise an original contribution to knowledge regarding virtue formation in Christian higher education. The thesis brings together MacIntyre's philosophical framework with Vygotsky's theories of the social formation of mind in activity in the next chapter. It will also bring to light mediational means, tools and signs, which might be used to form virtuous learning communities to foster non-coercive rearrangements of desire<sup>11</sup> and collaborative action to pursue the good. Therefore, this thesis purposely addresses a gap in faith-informed pedagogy, focusing on participants' understanding, learning, and identity. It suggests how change may be taking place in the interaction of practices and narratives and offers participants' understanding of a virtuous learning community. Although the context of the research is within the Christian tradition of higher education, the impact may prove significant for attempts to research and further human moral development through education in various cultures and traditions.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter sets the research in a relevant discourse of the relationship of higher education to ecclesiastical institutions and moral formation. From MacIntyre's wish for a new kind of institution, questions emerge which invite investigation of an alternative 'institutional embodiment' with communities of 'prayer, learning and labor' which may contribute to human flourishing (2007: xvi). Academics contest intentions towards moral formation in universities in theory, but few have attempted to show how such

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<sup>11</sup> Gayatri Spivak refers to teachers of the humanities as engaging in the 'uncoercive rearrangement of desire' (2003:101).

formation might be taking place in practice. Some scholars trace a history of secularization in Christian universities and colleges and suggest that the loss of particular theological language and practices specific to the Christian tradition may lead to a loss of distinctive identity.

The thesis takes up two of the counter-strategies of critics of the secularization process suggested by D'Costa. First, it addresses the call for a new kind of university, by investigating the UofN, an institution that claims to be a different kind of university. Secondly, this university seeks to foster learning communities with an enlarged space for worship, prayer, service, and discipleship in the DTS. Rather than focusing on academic theologians and theology to educate the intelligentsia for the church or to revitalize Christian culture, this thesis addresses practical theology as it is embodied in a community of Christian formation. Higton argues that real learning in the university is incomplete without worship and discipleship. His arguments identify the need to research the Christian practices of worship and discipleship as not only 'the most fitting accompaniments' but central to moral formation in education institutions seeking to be distinctively Christian. Glanzer, Alleman, and Ream (2017) address Christians in multiversities and also those seeking to develop faith-based universities. Drawing from historical and contemporary examples, they offer ways to address fragmentation and suggest reimagining the practices of the university, demonstrating their intellectual debt to Alasdair MacIntyre, Stanley Hauerwas, James K A Smith, and David I Smith. However, specific embodied practices, such as the 'liberating arts', remain mostly unexplored.

James Smith suggests that Christian education involves a formative process of shaping human desires, which are more central than either thinking or believing. In his anthropology, these desires are aimed through habits as persons engage in shared practices. By likening thick practices and rituals to liturgies, Smith offers a cultural

exegesis of secular and worship practices and their role in formation, or indeed deformation depending on the vision of the good being pursued. The need to offer a counter-formation through immersive participation in multiple Christian practices is suggested for education to be distinctively Christian. James Smith and David I Smith take up the challenge to experiment with pedagogical adaptations of Christian practices in the classroom, again drawing from MacIntyre, Bourdieu, Wenger and the practical theology of Christian practices developed by Dorothy Bass and Craig Dykstra. Along with other Christian professors, they give various accounts of attempts to integrate Christian practices in their teaching. In a similar vein, this thesis looks at embodied practices and narratives, but distinctively from the understanding of the participants, not primarily the teachers.

Another significant distinction is that Vygotsky's theories of the social formation of mind in activity and Wertsch's analysis of mediated action will be used to deepen and extend MacIntyre's teleological framework that informs us that tradition, institutions, communities, practices, and narratives are all central concepts in the development of virtues. MacIntyre himself does not give us a methodology for investigating virtue formation. This thesis draws together and connects theoretical resources for that purpose in Chapter Two, concluding with a practical theological integration in the Christian tradition.

After presenting the approach to methodology, theory, and data in Chapter Three, I will introduce and explain the institution of the UofN and some of its practices in what could be described as new monastic learning communities in Chapter Four. Chapter Five explains the community of practice of the DTS as a UofN prerequisite, maps the activities in it onto practices in the Christian tradition, and presents a summary of DTS participants' understanding of a good learning community. Chapter Six demonstrates how participants appropriate mediational means in their pursuit of virtue in certain

narrated scenes or episodes. Chapter Seven continues this with additional individual case studies and considers how participants reweave enacted narratives with signs and tools to discover and reshape identity and adjust the trajectory of their pursuit of moral purpose. Finally, from this vantage point on the journey, in Chapter Eight, I will summarise the arguments in previous chapters, provide answers to the research questions, restate the original contributions to knowledge, and identify the limitations of the research.

Drawing on participants' understandings, this thesis suggests how virtuous learning communities may assist learners to shape their own behaviour and to shape the world on their journey towards goodness in the Christian tradition. A training in the liberating arts of Christian practices and a resulting counter-formation may lead to increased freedom in education, opening new trajectories for learning and identity. This education might be considered an intentional, but non-coercive, rearrangement of desire through engagement, imagination, and alignment with practices and narratives in the Christian tradition. These processes may offer greater opportunities for collaborative action and transformation to serve the common good.

**Chapter Two**  
**Extending MacIntyre through Vygotsky:**  
**Mediating Virtue Formation from the External to the Internal and Out Again**

**Introduction**

Chapter One located the study within a recent discourse on higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian. It identified a lack of empirical research on social practices and participant perspectives regarding moral formation during Christian higher education. Chapter Two explores theoretical resources for investigating moral virtue formation and intellectual virtue formation without artificially separating them. First, it outlines Alasdair MacIntyre's theory of the rationality of virtue formation in a tradition. His teleological framework is used to conceptually establish the role of practices and narratives in forming ethical agents in traditioned, institutionally supported communities. Second, Lev Vygotsky and his followers in sociocultural and activity theory, such as James Wertsch and Etienne Wenger, are used to deepen and extend MacIntyre's framework for moral inquiry. These theorists provide tools to investigate the formation of mind in activity and moral and identity formation in situated learning. Third, the chapter incorporates literature in practical theology on pre-modern Christian practices that embody a way of life together. These theological resources offer a teleological narrative and a means to map contemporary activities and narratives in relation to ancient and continuing social practices in the Christian tradition.

**MacIntyre's Construal of Liberalism as a Tradition**

Arguing that rational moral inquiry can never be undertaken from a 'neutral' standpoint but always requires situating in a tradition with its constituent practices and narratives, Alasdair MacIntyre asserts that liberalism is one such tradition (1988:346). He considers the institution of 'the modern liberal university', arising from the removal of religious requirements for university teachers, to have subsequently succeeded in excluding religious belief and allegiance from the framework of rational inquiry. The liberal university assumed its standards of objectivity were independent of tradition and

accessible to students through a shared universal rationality accepted by all teachers (MacIntyre 1988:399).<sup>1</sup> In *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, (1990) MacIntyre outlines three fundamentally different forms of moral inquiry, undergirded by rival versions of rationality.

The first, the encyclopaedic, asserts that there is only one rationality, to which all enlightened persons agree. True knowledge, as distinguished from mere belief, is available as gathered ‘facts’ about the world. Problems and progress on solutions can be addressed within ‘the enclosing framework of a unified, encyclopaedic rationality’ (MacIntyre 1990:42).

The second, the genealogical (e.g. Nietzsche and Foucault), uses ‘strategies of insight and strategies of subversion’ (MacIntyre 1990:42) to unmask the will to power in all universal assertions of truth. Genealogy uncovers and deconstructs assumed truth, analysing the historical relationships between knowledge, power, the human subject, and human institutions. These first two rival conceptions are fundamentally at odds, but MacIntyre claims they both seek a unified history rooted in the progress of knowledge or the history of distortions and repressions (1990:58).

The third form, tradition-constituted moral inquiry, is proposed as both capable of genuine rationality within a tradition *and* capable of assessing the rationality of different traditions by recognizing questions arising within a tradition and their potential solutions. MacIntyre defines a ‘living tradition’ as a ‘historically extended, socially embodied argument, and an argument precisely in part about the goods which constitute

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<sup>1</sup> For an example of this thinking see Sealey (1985), who considers teaching in a way that presupposes or intends any form of religious commitment as ‘not appropriate’ and ‘open to the charge of indoctrination’ (1985:78–79).

As *teachers*, however, it is more appropriate for us to apply the secular rule of criticism proposed by Karl Popper, namely, that we attempt to refute the theory of our subject by solely rational means if we are to make progress in our understanding of the matters involved ... RE [Religious Education] should be regarded as yet one more secular subject ... If this means a paradigm shift in our thinking then this can only be beneficial to an educational theory whose means of progress lies in our secular rational attempts to refute it (Sealey 1985:85–86, italics in original).

that tradition' (2007:222).<sup>2</sup> Some traditions produce stronger and more consistent rationality. This definition of a living tradition allows robust disagreement and is not inherently conservative or reactionary. Indeed, education can be viewed as 'the transmission of a tradition', even a revolutionary or an emancipatory tradition (Sacks 1997:183–4).

As MacIntyre notes, 'Every tradition is embodied in some particular set of utterances and actions and thereby in all the particularities of some specific language and culture' (1988:371). A tradition, therefore, must be historically extended. It takes time to become embodied in multiple persons, generations, and institutions. The failure of the Enlightenment project to justify morality stems in part from its false view of the autonomous individual moral agent freed from tradition and a shared human *telos* (MacIntyre 2007:62). Morality, therefore, became untutored whether tethered to an assumption of universal rationality, emotivist passion, or a matter of individual choice. In contrast, MacIntyre (2002:2) argues that 'Moral concepts are embodied in and are partially constitutive of forms of social life.' Modern moral theorists, he argues, fail to adequately consider their own historical and social context. By construing liberalism as one tradition alongside others, MacIntyre justifies the pursuit of moral inquiry within the Christian tradition. If moral inquiry requires social embodiment in particular actions and utterances, this opens the possibility of locating their situatedness in a particular tradition. A particular moral formation that is both sociocultural and historical requires engagement in particular practices and the appropriation of particular language in a living tradition. Later I will argue that Vygotskian sociocultural theory and resources from practical theology can deepen this point.

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<sup>2</sup> Alexander (2012) contrasts the three views of tradition of Arendt, Oakeshott, and MacIntyre proposing that Arendt is concerned with beginnings and the human condition, Oakeshott with the middle and human conduct, and MacIntyre with the end and human virtue.



## **MacIntyre's Alternate Vision of University**

MacIntyre seeks to reconceive the university, not as the liberal, neutrally objective 'university of unconstrained agreements' but as a 'place of constrained disagreement' (1990:230–31). MacIntyre's alternate vision is a Catholic university in which a robust theistic philosophy presents a stronger case for understanding human nature than its philosophical rivals. This theistic philosophy would identify the 'omission, distortion, trivialization, or concealment' of other systems of thought, especially with respect to their misunderstandings of human nature and 'human beings as directed towards God' (MacIntyre 2009:179). With philosophy providing an integrative function by revealing relationships between theology and the 'secular disciplines', this ideal Catholic university would have different goals and structures from secular research universities. However, MacIntyre suggests no alternative practices to develop moral virtues.

Perhaps this is not surprising as MacIntyre is engaged in philosophical clarification. Nevertheless, his argument that virtue is embedded in the internal goods of practice(s) indicates that moral inquiry should attend to human action. MacIntyre calls for 'an up-front recognition that the modern social order is an incoherent agglomeration of the ruins of past moral communities, communities each with a shared system of metaphysical beliefs' (D'Andrea 2006:64). However, in *God, Philosophy, Universities* (2009) MacIntyre does not describe how a Catholic college or university might function as a religious community of virtue formation. As described in Chapter One, more recent accounts have begun to explore particular Christian pedagogical practices in institutions of higher education. Research to understand students' experiences of Christian practices and their relationship to virtue formation and narrated trajectories of moral purpose and identity development is only just starting. MacIntyre's virtue theory framework supports the effort to begin filling this research gap.

## MacIntyre's Neo-Aristotelian Virtue Theory

Virtue theory has experienced something of a revival.<sup>3</sup> It has a long pedigree, traced back through Classical Greek philosophy and the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam (MacIntyre 2002; Hare 2011). Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (2009), in the Classical Greek line, emphasizes a three-fold process. First, you must have the right *telos* or end purpose for humans, which according to Aristotle is *eudaimonia* (translated 'happiness', or 'flourishing'). Second, virtue is developed progressively by aiming at the mean and avoiding the excess or deficiency. Courage or bravery, for example, is the mean between the excess of rash action and the deficiency of cowardice. Third, the virtues are a *hexis*, a relatively stable 'disposition', developed by actions over time becoming habits. The disposition of virtue involves right action but also right desires or emotions in relation to the action, so virtue becomes 'second nature' (Wright 2010). The most virtuous person acts virtuously without struggling emotionally (Aristotle et al. 2009:19–24) (*The Nicomachean Ethics*, I.12-II.2, 1102a5-1103a10).

All the virtues need to function together to be a person of virtue. Aristotle's excellent moral character requires a harmony of cognitive and affective elements<sup>4</sup> displaying a diversity of virtues. Aristotle's list of virtues, however, is the construction of a social conservative reflecting the code of the Greek gentleman (MacIntyre 2002:65). This ideal person or hero is conceived in terms of statesman or citizen,

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<sup>3</sup> This revival has been traced to Anscombe's seminal essay 'Modern Moral Philosophy', which argues that modern moral philosophy is not possible until there is an adequate philosophy of psychology, and that, as a moral sense of 'ought' was dependent on divine law and therefore a divine legislator which is no longer commonly accepted, we are unlikely to reach a common understanding of human flourishing. Therefore, we should use an Aristotelian approach to virtues and vices (Anscombe 1958). An alternative reading is that Anscombe was actually arguing for the philosophical superiority of a religious-based ethic. See 'Does Modern Moral Philosophy Rest on a Mistake?' (Crisp 2004:86) for a critique of Anscombe and an argument that *binding conception* is implicit in *lived morality* 'as a set of practices, norms, beliefs, emotions, and so on, that has developed in a particular society'.

<sup>4</sup> By contrast, Socrates seems to only recognize a cognitive element in understanding the good. Similarly, the Stoics regard becoming virtuous as only requiring the development of cognitive capacities, and a virtuous person is 'indifferent' or without passion.

certainly not a woman or slave. The four principal or *cardinal* virtues are courage, justice, temperance, and practical wisdom (*phronesis*). These four especially are necessary for achieving *eudaimonia* or ‘human flourishing’.

In Greek, *aretē* (‘excellence’, or ‘virtue’ from the Latin *virtus*) also can be used of things. For example, a knife has the *aretē* of sharpness. In Homer, a ‘good’ king inherently had the ‘excellences’ of a king, not a king who made good moral choices. Word meanings change over time. Julia Annas argues that Plato and the Stoics held virtue as a skill, ‘the skill of living’, while Aristotle as a lone voice rejects that idea (2003:16). Aristotle views virtue as a state of character, but at the same time, it is a state that must be acquired in a similar way to which practical skills are acquired. As Annas puts it,

You have a role-model, and first you copy what he or she does, then come to understand for yourself what the point is of doing what that person does. Increase of understanding goes with increased autonomy of reflection and action (2003:17).

Aristotle is not concerned with moral responsibility or free will, but choice is involved. Actions can be evaluated based on whether they are voluntary, involuntary or non-voluntary. Regarding the mean, he states:

Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by reason, and by that reason by which the man of practical reason would determine it (Aristotle et al. 2009:35) (The *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.6, 1107a).

There are no universal moral rules that apply to every person or every situation, but a prudent man, one who possesses the quality of *phronesis*, will be able to determine the mean.<sup>5</sup> For Aristotle, moral virtue is a state of character (*hexis*). His concept of the ‘mean’ requires a progression towards the virtues and a virtuous disposition. Aristotle considers a young man unable to be taught intellectual virtue (*nous*) until he has first

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<sup>5</sup> It is perhaps misleading to apply the mean to every one of Aristotle’s virtues. It is difficult to see how a virtuous person could have an excess of ‘practical wisdom’.

learnt to be morally virtuous through practice and habit.<sup>6</sup> Intellectual virtues and moral virtues may not be separate, unconnected boxes. They are, however, primarily learnt differently, according to Aristotle. Moral virtues become a state of character as they are conditioned by learning to take pleasure in practising virtuous activities. Desire can be trained towards the good through habitual practice. Unless a person desires to be good by taking pleasure in doing good, they will not become a good person.

The Aristotelean logic of intellectual virtues sequentially following after moral virtues could separate intellectual virtues from moral virtues and assume that moral virtue formation is only possible or appropriate in children. In this way of thinking, higher education should only address intellectual virtues since the reformation of character is not possible, nor should it be educationally intended in adults. If the premise that moral change is impossible in adults is accepted, the argument of this thesis is a complete *non sequitur*. On the other hand, if moral development, moral reformation or even moral deformation is a possibility in adults, then we may ask, ‘What might be resources for the non-coercive rearrangement of desires towards the good in higher education?’

### **MacIntyre’s Conceptual Framework for Developing Virtue**

Neo-Aristotelian ethical theory outlines a three-part understanding of moral development. There is 1) *human-nature-as-it-is*, raw and untutored, 2) ‘*human-nature-as-it-could-be*’, if it achieved its true *telos* (‘end’ or ‘purpose’), and 3) the steps or process of forming those desires, habits, moral imperatives, and prohibitions that enable us as humans to move from the first towards the second (Kotva 1996:17, italics added; Kallenberg 2003:11–12). MacIntyre’s conceptual structure restores an integrated

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<sup>6</sup> Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* indicates a distinction between actuality (*energeia* or *entelecheia*) and potentiality (*dunamis*). Actuality is the *telos* and Aristotle prioritises it over potentiality, the capacity to be in a more completed state. The acorn or seed is a potentiality which was preceded in time by an actuality, an oak tree. Something capable of being is capable of not being. So potentiality is ‘perishable’ while the eternal is ‘imperishable’, so the eternal is ‘fully actual’ (Cohen 2000). This parallels Aristotle’s priority of form over matter and presents a metaphysical basis for progressing from potentiality to actuality in becoming virtuous.

approach to developing virtue. He argues that virtue requires three interconnected stages: 1) a practice or set of practices, 2) ‘the narrative order of a single human life’, and 3) a moral tradition, (MacIntyre 2007:186–187). These three concepts: practices, narratives, and tradition, along with virtue and *telos*, fit together as a philosophical framework for virtue formation. This virtue formation occurs in communities, whose practices are usually sustained by institutions. In summary: while engaging in social practices made meaningful by their interaction with narratives that constitute and extend a given tradition, humans learn virtues (moral qualities of excellence), which enable them to pursue the human *telos* of that tradition (Kallenberg 2003:28–29).

Virtues are embedded in practices. Practices are embedded in individual narratives, which draw from social and historical narratives embedded in a tradition.

Virtues must be exercised at all three levels, as MacIntyre states:

The virtues find their point and purpose not only in sustaining those relationships necessary if the variety of goods internal to practices are to be achieved and not only in sustaining the form of an individual life in which that individual may seek out his or her good as the good of his or her whole life, but also in sustaining those traditions which provide both practices and individual lives with their necessary historical context (2007:223).

Practices, narratives, and traditions all have histories. Engaging in a practice means engaging in ‘a relationship not only with its contemporary practitioners, but also with those who have preceded us in the practice, particularly those whose achievements extended the reach of the practice to its present point’ (MacIntyre 2007:194). The narrative view of self also requires a history. ‘For the story of my life is always embedded in the story of those communities from which I derive my identity. I am born with a past’ (MacIntyre 2007:221).

Moreover, within traditions ‘the pursuit of goods extends through generations’ (MacIntyre 2007:222). MacIntyre identifies the need for virtue in a living tradition to recognize how the ‘not-yet-completed narrative’ may grasp ‘those future possibilities which the past has made available to the present’ (2007:223). Since narratives involve an underlying sense of past, present, and future, narrative becomes the ‘essential genre

for the characterization of human actions' (MacIntyre 2007:208). This indicates the necessity of narrative for moral inquiry. It also offers a degree of human freedom in moral development by pursuing future possibilities in the 'not-yet-completed narrative' (MacIntyre 2007:223).

### **The Challenge and Necessity of Giving a Teleological Account**

In *After Virtue* (1981) MacIntyre suggests an allegory of a world where scientific inquiry is attempted after all sciences have been destroyed. His thesis is that moral speech and practice in the modern age are 'fragmented survivals from an older past' (MacIntyre 2007:111). If he is correct that their 'teleological character' is a 'ghost of conceptions of human nature and activity' from the pre-modern world, this explains difficulties in achieving a shared vision of 'goodness' (MacIntyre 2007:111). Perhaps for 'normative' virtue ethics, a shared *telos* is unnecessary, but the problem persists in agreeing on a list of virtuous traits (Crisp 2010). MacIntyre argues that these different lists are evidence of the different histories of practices and traditions. He does insist that 'justice, courage and honesty' are necessary virtues in any practice (MacIntyre 2007:191),<sup>7</sup> but failure to agree on a universal list does not undermine his project as his core conception of virtue is embedded in practices, the narrative order of a human life, and a tradition. Lists of virtues will no doubt continue to be made<sup>8</sup> and rejected as a Nietzschean imposition of will. We may well be concerned that this leads to moral relativism. Nevertheless, virtues are embedded in social and historical contexts and generally presume some preferred directionality towards the good.

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<sup>7</sup> I doubt these three virtues can be claimed as universal. The Sawi people of Irian Jaya honoured treachery as a virtue in their tradition. Legends told around the campfires were of heroes who 'formed friendships with the expressed purpose of later betraying the befriended one to be killed and eaten'. The shared practice was 'to fatten with friendship for the slaughter' (Richardson 1974:8). This is an example of a practice in which the virtue of courage was necessary but not justice or honesty. MacIntyre allows that certain practices may simply be evil, but generally, he appears reluctant to admit them as meeting his definition of a practice (2007:200).

<sup>8</sup> See 'The Fruits of the Spirit' for examples in civic, moral and performance character virtues (The Church of England Education Office 2015:7). In 'Illustrations of the Tao' C.S. Lewis asserts eight universal laws or duties, but he also indicates that they cannot be deduced or rationally proven from a supposed independent testimony (1943).

Kuna defends MacIntyre, distinguishing moral relativism from moral particularism, arguing that from a particular tradition, one can ‘make *universal* (moral) claims’ (2005:272, italics in original). He notes that Julia Annas rightly points out MacIntyre’s tension between defining tradition as a ‘historical understanding’, an ‘argument extended through time’ (MacIntyre 1988:12), and tradition as ‘essential location’ in intellectual beliefs and in institutions, communities, and practices. MacIntyre considers traditions incommensurable, ‘yet allows for conversation and rational dialogue between them’ (Kuna 2005:265). This thesis agrees that rational moral inquiry takes place within a tradition that is both a historically extended argument and embodied and essentially located in practices and communities. MacIntyre challenges anti-teleological philosophers to address the dilemma of answering what they are making progress towards or risk admitting they have made ‘no intelligent account of achievement through enquiry’ (Kuna 2005:271). This argument supports the necessity of giving a teleological account. Later in this chapter, a human *telos* in the Christian tradition will be presented, but first, we must attend to MacIntyre’s definition of practice.

### **MacIntyre’s Definition of Practice**

MacIntyre embeds virtue in an unwieldy, but influential, definition of a practice as:

any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended (2007:187).

Practice, according to MacIntyre, must hold together and make sense in a ‘complex form’; therefore, it is not a single action or a collection of random actions. It is ‘socially established’ and by this MacIntyre means it is both recognized and engaged in by others with a history of the practice embedded in a tradition. Practice is not, therefore, merely an ahistorical group activity. Practices are open to innovation and extension. Practices should primarily achieve ‘internal goods’, that is standards of excellence intrinsically

related to the practice. Virtue, in this first stage of embeddedness, is related to acquiring and exercising human qualities which ‘enable us to achieve’ these internal goods (MacIntyre 2007:191).

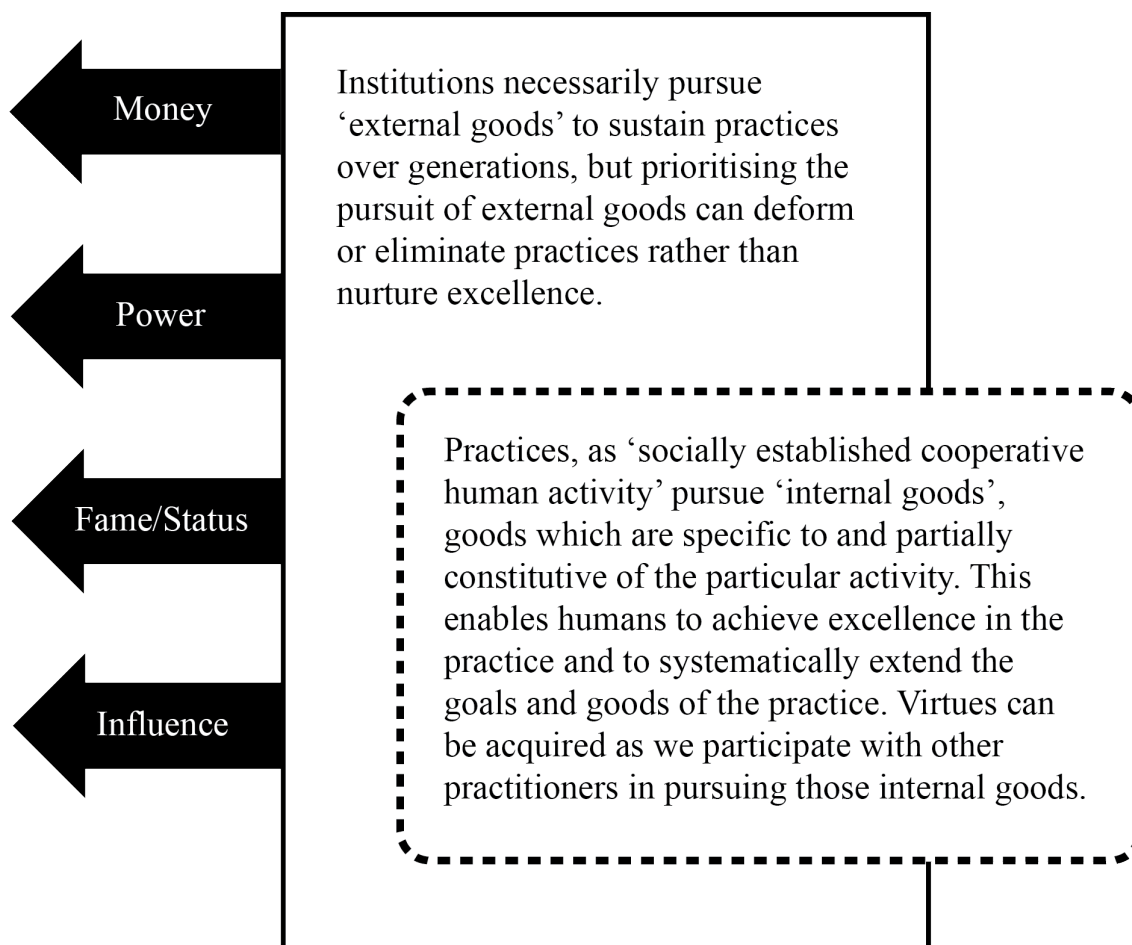
MacIntyre asserts that institutions are not practices, but an institution as a ‘bearer of a tradition of practice’ will engage in ‘a continuous argument’ regarding its purpose and the ‘goods’ of the tradition (2007:222). These arguments also take place within practices, so ‘cooperative’ must allow for conflict and contradictions. Institutions are distinguished from practices because institutions are ‘characteristically and necessarily concerned’ with distributing ‘external goods’ such as ‘money, power and status as rewards’ (MacIntyre 2007:194). For example, the institution of a Premier Football Club might, in pursuing and distributing money and fame, support excellence in the practice of football, while at the same time undermine the virtues of honesty and justice by training players to dive to gain a competitive advantage. Diving involves feigning injury in an attempt to deceive the referee or ‘simulation’ by pretending to be fouled. These deceptive intentions can be observable in behaviour (Morris & Lewis 2010).

In order to survive, practices require institutions to sustain them. Nevertheless, the internal goods of practices are ‘always vulnerable to the acquisitiveness’ and ‘competitiveness’ of the institution (MacIntyre 2007:194). According to MacIntyre, virtues are essential to ‘resist the corrupting power of institutions’, but ‘the making and sustaining of forms of human community – and therefore institutions – itself has all the characteristics of a practice’ (2007:194). The practice of forming and sustaining institutions is, therefore, subject to virtues and vices. While MacIntyre argues that ‘the corruption of institutions is always in part at least an effect of the vices’ (2007:195), his argument allows for the exercise of virtues. MacIntyre emphasizes that ‘external goods’ are genuine goods, but that if the ‘pursuit of external goods’ becomes ‘dominant’ in a society, virtues might wither and eventually disappear (2007:196). The distinction



between institutions and practices and the tension between the institutional pursuit of ‘external goods’ and the pursuit of the ‘internal goods’ of a practice is important in considering contexts where particular virtues might flourish, or indeed wither. See Figure 2.1. As institutions must necessarily pursue external goods to sustain practices, that pursuit can be potentially virtuous. The tension alerts us that some virtues and practices may wither if educational institutions prioritise the pursuit of ‘external goods’.

**Figure 2.1 Tensions Between External and Internal Goods**



The result of a practice is ‘that human power to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved are systematically extended’ (MacIntyre 2007:187). Institutions and their communities are necessary to sustain practices across generations. Virtues both arise out of communities engaging in a practice and are needed to pursue the internal goods of the practice and extend them. Otherwise, practices become corrupted by vices where ends and internal goods are not being

extended, and excellence is deteriorating. MacIntyre's definition is helpful by integrating the pursuit of internal goods, excellence, and conceptions of the *telos* of the 'good' with cooperative human activities.

### **MacIntyre's Scope of Practice**

All of the terms in MacIntyre's virtue framework are vigorously debated, not the least what constitutes a practice. MacIntyre's scope of practice is broad: architecture not bricklaying, farming not 'planting turnips' (2007:187). MacIntyre draws distinctions of scope but gives games preferential inclusion. Architecture and farming are collections of many diverse practices and using these as examples may start to merge into what MacIntyre means by tradition (Alexander 2012:37).<sup>9</sup> Jeffrey Stout (1988:276) used the game of baseball as an example of what is meant by practice; different players are doing different things, and the game cannot take place without cooperation. A game is easier to draw limits around, but does the practice of baseball only include the players playing the game, or is it broader, including the activities of the coaches, sponsors, and sportswriters? MacIntyre's scope of practice could be viewed as a constellation of many overlapping practices.

One significant debate arose when MacIntyre refused to accept 'teaching' as a practice, catalysing a special issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* (Vol.37.2, 2003). Philosophers of education, such as David Carr, Joseph Dunne, Pádraig Hogan, Terence McLaughlin and Nel Noddings joined in (Dunne & Hogan 2004). Dunne (1997), had argued for teaching as a practice, one which called for the support of reflective practitioners, rather than a technique to be acquired. The argument was inevitable as interlocutors had different practices in mind which they labelled teaching.

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<sup>9</sup> Oakshott defines practices more abstractly in ways that could be synonymous with tradition as a set of considerations, manners, uses, observances, customs standards, canons, maxims, principles, rules and offices specifying useful procedures or denoting obligation or duties which relate to human actions and utterances (1975:55).

The focus of this thesis is not teaching, so it need not to deal with the debate, but one problem the debate identifies is the scope and boundaries of MacIntyrean practice.

Reflecting on this debate, Hager seeks to refurbish a ‘broadly MacIntyrean account of practice’ (2011:545) addressing the criteria for determining who is included in a community engaging in a practice (2011:550). Hager concludes:

education, in common with construction, farming and fishing, is a broad generic area of activity that includes a diversity of practices. Practices within education include pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, higher education, adult education, and workplace education. Teaching is something that achieves very different and distinctive forms within each of these practices (2011:559).

Hager’s positions himself in ‘workplace education’. Given Hager’s conclusion regarding MacIntyre’s definition, a comparable scope of practice for this study would be ‘young adult discipleship in higher education’, but this scope seemed too broad for empirical research in the DTS. So, Hager’s conclusion did not offer a way forward. The problems encountered are: How can activities be more than random isolated activities? How can they form part of a constellation of overlapping practices? How can they be connected with practices in the Christian tradition? To orientate the way and find theoretical tools to investigate how participants understand and connect smaller practices through narratives in learning communities, I turned to practice theory.

## **Practice Theory**

Debates continue over the relationship of theory and practice in the philosophy of education (Hirst & Carr 2005), but the pendulum is swinging towards practice and a more unified view (Misawa 2011). Theodore Schatzki (2001; 2013) notes the ‘practice turn’ in educational research. Significant efforts continue to characterise ‘high quality close-to-practice research’ in UK education (Wyse et al. 2018:23). Practice theories, in general, focus attention on ‘an organised constellation of different people’s activities’ (Schatzki 2013:13). Humans both shape and are shaped by their practices. Schatzki identifies a core of theorists who conceive ‘of practices as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical

understanding' (2001:11). Pierre Bourdieu's (1977; 1990) 'structuring structures' and Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration involving the analysis of both structures and agents are leading examples.<sup>10</sup> Polanyi's well-known example is that knowing how to ride a bicycle does not mean knowing how to 'tell' how one is riding. Accounts of human activity cannot simply be made explicit in words, but involve embodied and 'tacit knowing', an 'act of knowing based on indwelling' (Polanyi 1958; 2009:24). Generally, practice theorists oppose mind-body dualism. Although mentioning practice theories such as Bourdieu's account of *habitus* (1977; 1990), this thesis uses social learning theories arising from the conceptual breakthroughs of Lev Vygotsky in the early twentieth century. In addition to 'human action mediated by cultural tools' (Wertsch 1985; 1991; 1998), these include Lave and Wenger's 'Legitimate Peripheral Participation' (LPP) (1991) and 'Communities of Practice' (CoP) (Wenger 1998). Sociocultural concepts and methodologies provide useful tools to explore everyday life and learning (Daniels 2001; 2008; Edwards & Daniels 2004). Attention to how persons are impacted by cultural practices and how they use mediational means to enact cultural practices avoids reducing the study of virtue to a phenomenon of traits in the individual mind or an unconscious result of larger social forces.

### **Turning to Vygotsky to Deepen MacIntyre's Philosophical Framework**

MacIntyre's compelling philosophical framework for the rationality of virtue formation in a tradition still leaves practical questions unanswered.<sup>11</sup> He provides no methods to investigate smaller, less distinctly separate, patterns of activity, or persons' engagement

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<sup>10</sup> There is a debate between Giddens' 'structuration' and Margaret Archer's 'morphogenesis' (continuous dualistic sequential analysis 'unravelling the dialectical interplay between action and structure' (Archer 2010:228) over this middle ground between structuralism and the micro-sociology of everyday life (Fielding 1988). On my reading, Archer's argument for morphogenesis against structuration seems clear and compelling, but I note that Giddens has strongly influenced Etienne Wenger's situated learning theory (Wenger 1998:281).

<sup>11</sup> Although MacIntyre confirmed to Beadle and Moore that his thinking regarding the 'compartmentalised self' was 'in part developed through empirical work in which hypothetical scenarios were put to power company executives' (2006:329), there is an evident 'lack of empirical work undertaken using MacIntyre's concepts' (2006:337; Moore & Beadle 2006:386). This lack is unexpected, considering MacIntyre's emphasis on practice.

in them. How can participants learning to exercise virtues within a community be investigated (MacIntyre 2007:194–5)? Virtue ethics should be more than a theory of virtues; it should enable virtuous learning in practices that form virtuous people who pursue goodness together in a tradition. How could his framework be deepened and extended to enable qualitative research in virtue formation in practices? Smaller practices (activities) and participants’ narratives of what they are doing as they engage in them could prove powerful as a means of telling us what we need to know. Here practice theory, particularly the work of Vygotsky and his followers, offers additional resources.

Both MacIntyre and Vygotsky were deeply influenced by Marxist thought and share commonalities. These include a focus on social practices, the role of narrative in forming the self, a commitment to historical analysis, and a concern for the role of human agency and freedom. Despite these commonalities and the potential for interaction, I found very little cross-referencing of the bodies of literature between their followers.<sup>12</sup> With very few exceptions, Vygotsky is not associated with theories of moral development, and sociocultural theory eschews teleological accounts of human development. This gap was a chasm to be avoided or bridged. I chose to bridge it by connecting Vygotsky and MacIntyre as theoretical resources to examine individual learning that is socially situated and to focus on the process of cultural acquisition and transformation. The focus is on activities and understanding how and why people act and engage in those settings. Finally, the focus is not only on individual learning but is at the same time on changes occurring in the learning system.

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<sup>12</sup> One exception was meeting Tatiana Rodriguez Leal in 2015 at a Cultural and Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) Special Interest Group (SIG) in Cambridge. She was an Oxford DPhil Candidate and was seeking to extend Vygotsky by using MacIntyre in her research on the learning trajectories of managers during the privatisation of the Royal Mail. Although in 2018 her thesis (Leal 2016) was still embargoed, she kindly let me read a copy.

## **Vygotsky and Sociocultural and Activity Theory**

Vygotsky and those influenced by him have generated a rich and varied set of concepts and methodological approaches to explore everyday life broadly grouped under sociocultural and activity theory (Daniels 2001; 2008; Edwards & Daniels 2004). It includes several streams of research in the social sciences emerging from concern with the interactions of mind and world. One stream in North America stems from the disciplines of developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, and socio-linguistics and learning associated with names such as Jerome Bruner, Michael Cole, James Wertsch, Barbara Rogoff, and Urie Bronfenbrenner, whose work at Cornell University in the ‘ecology of human development’ is also inspired by the ideas of Vygotsky (Bronfenbrenner 1995b). These names and others form what might loosely be called the sociocultural or cultural-historical stream. I use this stream and especially the work of James Wertsch to investigate mediated action.

A different stream focuses attention on distributed cognition, which could also be employed to investigate how a community or group develop and demonstrate distributed virtue, but is not the focus of this study. Another related stream is ‘situated action and communities of practice’ (Daniels 2008:91–114) and includes the work of Lave and Wenger. Although CoP has been much used as a theoretical framework and the overreliance on the participation metaphor for learning criticised (Edwards 2005), it offers analysis of processes of learning, boundary negotiation, and identity formation.

Finally, a fourth stream stems from Russia and the work of Romanovich Luria and Aleksei Leont’ev, students and colleagues of Vygotsky from 1924 to 1934, who together form the ‘troika’<sup>13</sup> of the Vygotskian school. Luria and Leont’ev developed the research after Vygotsky’s death in 1934, especially emphasizing activity systems and their interaction with consciousness (Edwards & Daniels 2004:107). In this stream, the

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<sup>13</sup> However, Yasnitsky’s (2011) careful research points towards Leont’ev inserting himself to form the myth of a ‘troika’.

work of Yrjö Engeström extended these concepts by using activity systems in research interventions, especially in complex systems of public health care in Finland. This has come to be known as Cultural Historical Activity Theory or CHAT, a term Michael Cole coined in 1996 (Edwards 2011). CHAT tends to move upward and outward with a primary focus on activity systems and broader social structures, identifying contradictions and introducing interventions. It struggles to pull this movement together with a downward and inward movement addressing identity formation and experience in learning (Daniels 2012). The process of how individuals learn to become virtuous persons was likely to be backgrounded and obscured if CHAT were foregrounded, so I decided Wertsch's sociocultural approach influenced by Vygotsky better held together the social and individual for this research.

### **Wertsch on Vygotsky's Theoretical Core**

Wertsch summarizes the core of Vygotsky's theoretical framework as 1) relying on a developmental method, a genetic<sup>14</sup> analysis, 2) claiming that social processes always come before higher mental processes in an individual, in other words, these processes arise from social life and 3) claiming that to understand mental processes we must understand human action and the tools and signs (artefacts) that mediate them at both social and individual levels (1985:14–15; 1991:19). The genetic analysis or developmental method enables the researcher to seek to understand the origins and transitions, the process not the product, of higher mental functions.<sup>15</sup> Vygotsky never provided a precise definition of higher mental functions suggesting it was premature to do so. Luria's later formulation suggests they are “complex and self-regulating, and are

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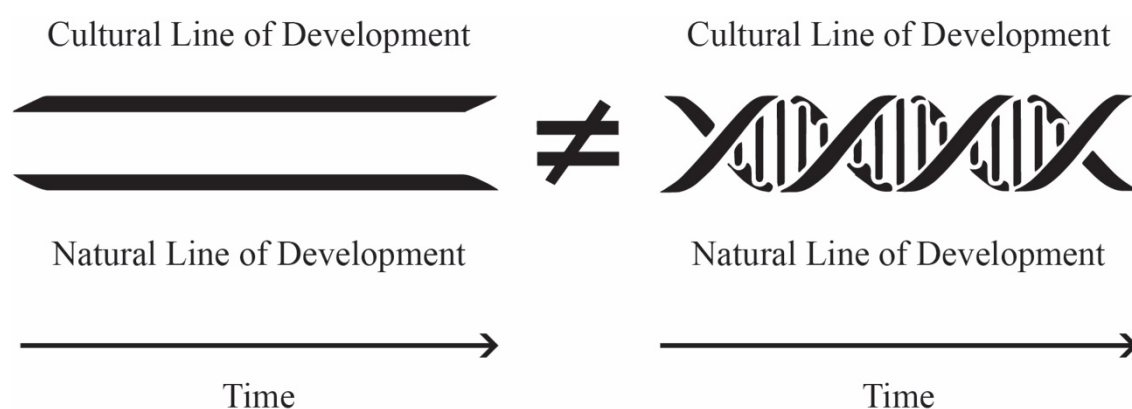
<sup>14</sup> Wertsch (1985:234) clarifies that 'genetic' [*geneticheski*] in Russian does not refer to genes or genetic codes in Vygotsky's usage but to developmental processes.

<sup>15</sup> Vygotsky repeatedly distinguishes between elementary and higher mental functions, perhaps in response to the emphasis in behaviourism of reducing all behaviour, whether animal or human to an investigation of the stimulus-response mechanism. Wertsch (1985:25) identifies four characteristics distinguishing higher mental functions: 1) behaviour becomes voluntarily self-regulated, not merely a result of stimuli in the environment, 2) consciousness of mental processes emerges, 3) social processes and social interaction originate the functions, and 4) all depend first on the mediational use of signs and tools.

social in origin, mediated in their structure, and conscious and voluntary in their mode of functioning” (Luria, 1980, p.31)’ (as quoted in Meshcheryakov 2007:161). Higher mental functions are socially formed and sign mediated.

Rather than a phenotypic (descriptive) analysis, a genotypic (explanatory) analysis of development is used (Wertsch 1985:17–18; 1991:19–20). Vygotsky includes four developmental processes: 1) Phylogenetic development – the slow changes in a species over millennia, 2) Cultural-historical development – the changes over centuries and decades with created artefacts humans are shaped by and use to shape culture, 3) Ontogenetic development – changes in the lifetime of an individual, and 4) Microgenetic development – development preceded by learning in a particular context and intertwined with the other three (Rogoff 2003:65). Vygotsky recognized that the ‘cultural line of improvement’ or development co-exists with and is dependent upon the ‘line of natural development’ involving human growth and maturation (1994:54). Rather than independent parallel tracks, Vygotsky indicates that natural and cultural lines become intertwining and continuously interacting through sign and tool use. See Figure 2.2.

**Figure 2.2 Cultural and Natural Lines of Development**



These two lines of development are mutually transformative. Vygotsky’s work, however, emphasizes the cultural line. Human action always has an external sociocultural history, but it also has an ‘internal history’ (Vygotsky 1994:62).



Therefore, rather than taking phenotypic snapshots to measure higher mental functions or human action statically, the genetic research method stresses the need to understand the sociocultural historical processes of how they came to be.

### **All Higher Mental Functions Originate in Social Relations and Processes**

In addition to relying on a developmental method/genetic analysis, the second core theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework insists that all higher mental processes in an individual are related to and preceded by social processes between people. The 'general law of cultural development' states:

Every function in the cultural development of the child appears on the stage twice, in two forms - at first as social level, and then as psychological; at first as a form of cooperation between people, as a group, an intermental [interpsychological] category, then as a means of individual behaviour, as an intramental [intrapychological] category. This is the general law from the construction of all higher mental functions (Vygotsky 1998:169).

Vygotsky also calls this 'the law of sociogenesis of higher forms of behavior' and identifies the role speech plays initially in communication, association, and organizing group behaviour. It later becomes the 'means of thinking and of all higher mental functions, the basic means of personality formation' (Vygotsky 1998:169–70). As he puts it, 'A cast of collective social relations between people' leads to the formation of the higher mental structures and this same process 'leads to the development of children's ethics' (Vygotsky 1998:170). It would be easy to fall into the trap of seeing social processes as independent entities acting upon and forming individuals' higher mental processes. Rogoff reminds us:

In the emerging sociocultural perspective, culture is not an entity that influences individuals. Instead, people contribute to the creation of cultural processes and cultural processes contribute to the creation of people. Thus, individual and cultural processes are mutually constituting rather than defined separately from each other (2003:51).

The process of internalization (sometimes translated 'interiorization') is a complex one. It does not involve a simple transfer of external processes or activities to an internal one. External activity, for Vygotsky, involves sign-mediated social processes, and he particularly emphasizes the role of speech. The external and internal are not identical, but neither are they unrelated. They have a genetic history, and the internal processes

are created and transformed through interaction with social behaviour. In Vygotsky's theory, the actions of individuals are not separate from the activities in which they engage, nor indeed from the institutions and communities in which they participate.

Rogoff clarifies her position:

Rather than individual development being influenced by (and influencing) culture, from my perspective, people develop as they participate in and contribute to cultural activities that themselves develop with the involvement of people in successive generations. People of each generation, as they engage in sociocultural endeavors with other people, make use of and extend cultural tools and practices inherited from previous generations. As people develop through their shared use of cultural tools and practices, they simultaneously contribute to the transformation of cultural tools, practices, and institutions (2003:52).

Rogoff indicates that both individuals and institutions build 'repertoires of practice' which emerge from distinct cultural traditions (Rogoff et al. 2016:472). Although 'repertoires of practice' resembles Bourdieu's *habitus* and how structured structures become structuring structures (1977; 1990), Rogoff insists on the role of individual agency and changes in repertoire leading to innovations in practices. Despite his emphasis on the sociocultural processes in the formation of self, Vygotsky maintains 'a robust sense of the individual' (Bakhurst 2007:74). Key transition points in the line of cultural genetic analysis are associated with introducing a new form of mediation, or an existing but more advanced version of mediation (Wertsch 1985:22) leading to the third theme.

### **Understanding Human Action Mediated through Tool and Sign**

All three themes in Wertsch's description of the core of Vygotsky's theoretical framework are interlocking. Nevertheless, Wertsch argues that the third theme, human action mediated through tool and sign, is 'analytically prior to the other two' (1985:15). Internalization involves both 'knowing how' to use a cultural tool, and also 'appropriating' the tool use for the individual's own ends. Perhaps Vygotsky's use of the word internalization can be misunderstood to mean there is a barrier which is crossed between the external (social) and the internal (individual). Internalization is a process in which external social patterns of activity, specifically sign/tool mediated

social processes, begin to be voluntarily executed on the internal or intrapsychological plane (Vygotsky 1994:69; Wertsch 1985:61–67). Meshcheryakov prefers ‘interiorization’ to refer to Vygotsky’s concept of ‘the formation of the inner means of mental activity out of the external means of communication in joint activity’ (2007:165). Interiorization refers to the formation of ‘systemic’ structures of consciousness, rather than the ‘meaning’ structures (Meshcheryakov 2007:165). Vygotsky’s framework of 1) genetic analysis of development, 2) social processes preceding individual higher mental processes, and 3) mediated action (both social and individual) using sign and tool, helps us analyse and understand what people think and feel (mind) as rooted in what people do (activity). Since Vygotsky claims that higher mental function always begins in the social, ‘followers of Vygotsky’s approach conceive of mind primarily as *activity*, which can extend beyond the skin to interpenetrate with other minds in interpersonal exchanges’ (Ferryhough 2008:228, italics in original).<sup>16</sup>

Vygotsky was especially interested in how learners make progress. Human joint activity appears to involve three forms of mediation: 1) a human mediator(s), 2) sign mediation (semiotic artefact), and 3) tool mediation (technological artefact). This ‘holy trinity’ provides the basis of the ‘genetic unit of development’ (Meshcheryakov 2007:167). Investigating these may reveal how learners make progress and how development is taking place. This led me to consider how research into virtue formation might become a practice-based account grounded in an analysis of ‘individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means’ (Wertsch 1991:12), which might demonstrate how learners were making progress in moral development.

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<sup>16</sup> Edwin Hutchins develops the concept of distributed cognition. Cognition is not disembodied but distributed over multiple people and the material world, including tools such as machines. One example is distributed cognition on the bridge of a large navy ship (Hutchins 1995). Neil Mercer (2013) presents the ‘social brain’ as a useful concept to understand the developmental relationship between Vygotskian ‘intermental’ (collective) intellectual activity and ‘intramental’ (individual) intellectual activity.

## **Mediating Artefacts in Vygotsky**

Vygotsky's method seeks to overcome the Cartesian split between the individual mind and the societal structure (Engeström 2001:134) through the insertion of mediational means.<sup>17</sup> Vygotsky's mediational means have been delineated in several ways, including the 'holy trinity' in the previous section. Artefacts are imbued with meaning and are both material and symbolic. Consider the meaning inscribed in a wedding ring (technological artefact), the action of placing it on a finger (mediated action with human mediator-using-technological-artefact), the performative utterance 'With this ring, I thee wed' (mediated action with human-mediator-using-semiotic-artefact or sign), all in the context of activities in the practice of a wedding ceremony with a minister (human mediator) presiding, and other mediators witnessing the event. The wearing of that band of metal, or refusal to wear it any longer, will have symbolic significance, but human action cannot be interpreted in isolation. Kozulin identifies 'two faces of mediation, one human, the other symbolic' (2002:14). He notes that because human mediation is context-dependent and occurring with numerous variations, classification is extremely difficult (Kozulin 2002:15). The same can be said for mediational artefacts.

## **Wertsch's Ten Properties of Mediated Action**

Wertsch distinguishes between human language and narrative as a 'cultural tool' and speech as 'a form of mediated action' (1998:73). He claims that virtually 'all human action is mediated action' and a list of mediated action would be so expansive or so abstract as to be meaningless (Wertsch 1998:25). He does, however, give a list of ten properties of mediated action: 1) Agent-and-mediational-means involves an irreducible tension; 2) All mediational means, even a seemingly symbolic one like spoken

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<sup>17</sup> Engeström considers Vygotsky's inclusion of mediating artefacts as essential to understanding the interaction of the individual subject and the 'object-orientedness' of activity to be a revolutionary conceptual breakthrough (2001:134). However, Dilthey had introduced the intermediate step of external expression in communication or action in hermeneutics in 1900. Nevertheless, Vygotsky is critical of Dilthey, particularly in regards to dividing psychology into a hermeneutical discipline when dealing with higher cognitive functions and a 'causal-scientific discipline' when dealing with 'physical mechanisms of behavior' (Bakhurst 2007:75).

language, are material; 3) All mediated action or activity is directed towards multiple and simultaneous goals; 4) Mediated action occurs along one or multiple developmental paths (phylogenetic, cultural-historical, ontogenetic, or microgenetic); therefore genetic analysis can be used; 5) A particular mediational means offers both constraints and affordances for action; 6) The introduction of a new mediational means results in a transformation of the action and simultaneously the skill of the actor;<sup>18</sup> 7) ‘Knowing how’ or ‘mastery’ characterizes an aspect of the relationship of individuals and their use of mediational means; 8) An intertwined but potentially distinct characterization is appropriation ‘the process of taking something that belongs to others and making it one’s own’ (Wertsch 1998:53); 9) Mediational tools can be produced and consumed for other reasons than facilitating mediated action, there can be spin-offs and misuses and unintended uses; 10) Power and authority are always involved with the use of mediational tools, and they can be shifted and transformed through the introduction of new cultural tools<sup>19</sup> (Wertsch 1998:25–72).

Appropriating this list of ten properties as a tool to analyse mediated action affords several potential benefits. Intrapersonal dialogue is not merely viewed as thinking but as a material tool used to modify behaviour and thinking processes. Recognizing that mediated action simultaneously has multiple and potentially contradictory goals means these can be teased out and explicated. Tracing the history of human action along one or more lines of development through genetic analysis is valid in interpreting mediated action. The identification of constraints, not just affordances, is in danger of being overlooked when seeking mediated action that may enable virtue.

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<sup>18</sup> Wertsch utilizes the imagery of pole-vaulter-with-pole. Changing from bamboo to aluminium to fibreglass transforms the action, the nature of the human skill and indeed, what can be achieved by the agent-operating-with-mediational-means (1995:65–67; 1998:43–45). Introduction of a new or improved mediational means can cause mediated action to undergo a transformation that is not just incremental but fundamental.

<sup>19</sup> Wertsch recognizes that he uses terms such as ‘mediational means’ and ‘cultural tools’ interchangeably with regard to human action (1998:17).

Spin-offs and creative uses and misuses of mediational means are likely to increase in areas of boundary-crossing. Power and authority, and how new tools and their mastery affect mediated action all provide multiple avenues for analysis. These avenues facilitate research both on how mediated action contributes to progress in the internalization of virtues, and also how mediated action, as it moves from the internal to the external, can produce transformations in practices.

### **Vygotsky's Preferred Unit of Analysis: Word as Contextualized Volitional Action**

Word meaning is one preferred unit of analysis for Vygotsky, and he considers that one of his key contributions to theorizing about thinking and speech is the discovery that word meaning develops and changes (Wertsch 2007:183). In her Prologue to Volume 5 of *The Collected Works of Vygotsky*, Dorothy Robbins explains: 'Word for Vygotsky implies a socialized context that never stands alone. Word for him is a central feature of consciousness with an invisible, but constant circular relationship between word-thought-word' (1999:vii). This speaking and thought is embedded in action and includes an expression of will, as Vygotsky (1998:169) writes:

At the very beginning the word is connected with action and cannot be separated from it. It is itself only one of the forms of action. This ancient function of the word, which could be called a volitional function, persists to these times. The word is a command.

This unity of action and speech, if applied to moral formation, allows the theorization of movement from the external social to the internal. 'Specifically because the word fulfilled the function of a command with respect to others, it begins to fulfil the same function with respect to oneself and becomes the basic means for mastering one's own behavior' (Vygotsky 1998:169). Although Wertsch argues that the preferred unit of analysis should be mediated action instead of word meaning, it is clear that Vygotsky viewed word as intimately connected with and indeed inseparable from action. In comparison, MacIntyre also claims that 'utterances' are 'one class of deeds, classified just as deeds are classified' (1988:374). Word or utterance, therefore, is one form of mediated action.

## **How Participants Acquire and Use Mediational Tools**

This study researches ‘the middle ground’ and shows how participants acquire and use the mediational signs and tools which may enable virtues to form. The unit of analysis, therefore, is first of all ‘individual(s)-operating-with-mediational-means’ (Wertsch 1991:96). In order to understand mediational signs and tools and their appropriation, we must explore through genetic analysis how they came to be and the social processes from which they arise. ‘The task of a sociocultural approach is to explicate the relationships between human action, on the one hand, and the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts in which this action occurs, on the other.’ (Wertsch 1998:24) The approach accepts ‘teleological action’, but the analysis does not assume it is only one individual acting (Wertsch 1991:12), or that the *teloi* or objects of the action are singular or always consistent. This complexity leads to significant methodological challenges for the researcher (Daniels 2008:11). To address the challenges, I sought to focus on specific narrated scenes or episodes (usually narrated by more than one participant), specific individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means, and specific mediational means. This is explained in Chapter Three.

## **Burke’s Pentad for Investigating Human Action**

To make human action intelligible, we can move towards an episode with its narrative history. ‘Stories are lived before they are told—except in the case of fiction’ (MacIntyre 2007:212). An isolated human action, such as ‘Sue sat on Sam’, cannot become morally intelligible until it is contextualized through narrative (Pinches 2002:217). In ‘The Task of Sociocultural Analysis’ in *Mind as Action*, Wertsch (1998) presents an extended quote by Kenneth Burke as a ‘dramatic’ framework for investigations. Wertsch (1998:12-13) notes its ‘deceptive simplicity’ in asking the most basic of questions: What? Where? Who? How? Why? Burke writes:

We shall use five terms as generating principle of our investigation. They are: Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, Purpose. In a rounded statement about motives, you must have some word that names the *act* (names what took place, in thought or deed), and another that names the *scene* (the background

of the act, the situation in which it occurred); also, you must indicate what person or kind of person (*agent*) performed the act, what means or instruments he used (*agency*), and the *purpose*. Men may violently disagree about the purposes behind a given act, or about the character of the person who did it, or how he did it, or in what kind of situation he acted; or they may even insist upon totally different words to name the act itself. But be that as it may, any complete statement about motives will offer *some kind of* answers to these five questions: what was done (act), when or where it was done (scene), who did it (agent), how he did it (agency), and why (purposes). (1969,p. xv) (as quoted in Wertsch 1998:13)

This framework avoids the tendency to focus on only one or two aspects of the pentad of Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, or Purpose. It offers multiple perspectives on human action and the dramatic tensions that emerge. Using mediated action for analysis avoids individualistic reductionism, but the scene must be set.

MacIntyre also understands ‘lives as “enacted dramatic narratives”’ (2016:239).

This similarity represents another connection to deepen his virtue theory framework through sociocultural analysis, but also to extend sociocultural theory into moral development by providing not only a historical narrative but a teleological narrative.

MacIntyre summarizes his theoretical conclusion from his account of several individuals’ lives, saying that:

Agents do well only if and when they act to satisfy only those desires whose objects they have good reason to desire, that only agents who are sound and effective practical reasoners so act, that such agents must be disposed to act as the virtues require, and that such agents will be directed in their actions toward the achievement of their final end (2016:243).

He finally states: ‘To live well is to act so as to move toward achieving the best goods of which one is capable and so as to become the kind of agent capable of achieving those goods’ (MacIntyre 2016:315). Burke’s pentad gives reasons to consider narrated scenes (episodes) and activities which impact the participants (agents) employing their mediational means as potential contexts where narrative histories make human action morally intelligible. The episodes DTS participants narrate as impactful might indicate development, similar to Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD).

### **Expanding Zones of Proximal Development into Moral Development**

Vygotsky’s best-known legacy is the idea that learning precedes development in the zone of proximal development (ZPD). ZPD is the area ‘*between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of*



*potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers'* (Vygotsky 1978:86, italics in original).

Chaiklin (2003:42) critiques the common conception of ZPD as referring to learning in general and the facilitation of tasks to be learnt easily and joyfully. In contrast, Vygotsky uses ZPD specifically to refer to development, not learning, and development and problem solving can be frustrating and difficult.<sup>20</sup> Very few authors seek to extend sociocultural theory into the realm of moral education or moral development. Tappan (1998; 2005b) is one of the few who, along with Crawford (2001), tends to focus on intellectual concept formation referencing Kohlberg's stages of moral reasoning. Tappan does use the ZPD and narrative and storytelling to consider how these might be employed. In an article co-authored with Day (1996), Tappan suggests a narrative approach to moral development. Self is proposed as a *dialogical self* instead of an *epistemic subject*, and 'moral life becomes an ongoing dialogue among different stories, scripts, and scenes' (Day & Tappan 1996:75). In a later article, relying on Wertsch, Tappan (2006) gives an example of how mediational/cultural tools for moral functioning or decision making might be appropriated by a student being interviewed. He had earlier introduced the student to Kohlbergian stages of moral reasoning. Without knowing this, one might wrongly assume that the student was reasoning at a higher cognitive stage of moral reasoning.

By addressing moral education towards increasing fluency in the use of 'mediational means' and extending ZPD into moral development, we begin to see how morally capable peers and pedagogues might indicate the signs and tools to pay attention to and deepen their meaning. This approach to moral education could lead to moral development. However, the development of intellectual virtues and the

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<sup>20</sup> Vygotsky had an excellent tutor, Solomon Ashpiz, who was exiled due to involvement in a student demonstration at university. Ashpiz questioned his pupil in ways that helped him recognize his omissions or mistakes, allowing Vygotsky to feel that he had made the progress himself. Social relations between Vygotsky and his tutor may be the root of his concept of ZPD (Kotik-Friedgut & Friedgut 2008:20).

introduction of critical knowledge might only give the appearance of moral development. Words can be used to merely ‘talk about’ or ‘write about’ without becoming embodied as contextualized, volitional action. Hence, MacIntyre’s framework of virtue extended historically and embedded in multiple layers becomes essential for genuine moral inquiry. Virtue must be exercised and produced in a practice, but it also must be seen in the narrative unity of the individual human life emerging from social narratives in communities, all necessitating virtue extension in a teleological tradition.

### **MacIntyre, Vygotsky, and the Telos of Character**

Although he eschews idealism and is ambivalent about defining a *telos*, in *The*

*Dynamics of Child Character* Vygotsky makes claims which seem to include both:

The revolutionary future-oriented perspective allows us to understand the development and life of a personality [*lichnost*] as an integral process which struggles forward with objective necessity toward an ultimate goal, toward a finale, projected by the demands of social existence (2004a:196).

Along with MacIntyre, Vygotsky appears to claim that to understand human personality both the historical genesis and end goal must be considered. However, rather than Aristotle’s *eudaimonia*, Vygotsky’s undefined *telos* may be projected from ‘the demands of social existence’ (2004a:196).<sup>21</sup> In contrast, we shall see later in this chapter that the *telos* of the Christian tradition is revealed and transcendent. Vygotsky raises teleological questions as essential for comprehending human action and features of character.

Just as in a film, a framesequene [sic] representing one moment of motion remains incomprehensible without the subsequent moments, outside the motion as a whole, similarly the trajectory of a bullet is defined by the final point or gun sight. In precisely the same way, every act and every feature of character raises the following questions: Toward what is it striving? What is its goal? Into what is it transformed? Toward what does it gravitate? (Vygotsky 2004a:192)

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<sup>21</sup> A careful reading of Vygotsky’s manuscripts and notes indicates a marked transition from ‘possible religious faith in the Kingship of God to the communist belief in a Radiant Future’ (Zavershneva & van der Veer 2018:39). From 1914-1917 Vygotsky’s focus was ‘the Jewish question’ and his notes and articles are filled with Holy Scripture quotations and demonstrations of his knowledge of Talmudic literature. By 1925 Vygotsky wrote: “‘Russia is the first country in the world. The Revolution is our supreme cause ... I speak on behalf of the Revolution’” (Van der Veer and Zavershneva, 2011:466)’ (as quoted in Zavershneva & van der Veer 2018:50).

Character must always be examined dynamically, not statically, paying attention to a person's past but also to the future. While MacIntyre uses the phrase 'the narrative order of a single human life' (2007:187), Vygotsky refers to 'an integral biographical plan of personality ... a main line of development which transforms the history of a man's life from a row of disconnected and separate episodes into a connected, integral, life-long process' (2004a:192). According to MacIntyre, a uniquely human characteristic is being called to account for our actions. Even a person who has experienced their life episodically 'has a history and can be evaluated as a life' (MacIntyre 2016:242).

MacIntyre is more orientated towards the long view of *telos* in 'enacted narrative' from conception to end (2016:233), but Vygotsky also recognizes the need to connect past *and* future goals to make the biography of a life and its character comprehensible.<sup>22</sup> In this thesis, the *teloi* of MacIntyre, Vygotsky, and the Christian tradition need not agree. What is crucial is that Vygotsky insists that research into higher mental functions should focus on *the process of becoming*. This positions virtue formation research within trajectories of character development, investigating processes that are lifelong.

### **Blind Spots in Using Vygotsky's Ideas**

Van der Veer and Valsiner (1994:6) identify several 'blind spots' in using Vygotsky's ideas. First, he receives honour for ideas that are very interdependent with other European and American thinkers and researchers now long forgotten. The concern in this thesis is not to attribute credit, but to use theoretical tools for empirical research. Second, unlike some later versions of activity theory, Vygotsky maintains a robust sense of the individual as a developing person. This serves to strengthen the case for deepening MacIntyre through Vygotsky by retaining attention on the development of

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<sup>22</sup> Vygotsky drew on Marx's methods of historical analysis. MacIntyre, a Marxist, later converted to Catholicism. Ironically, until recently a very overlooked aspect was Vygotsky's family upbringing and the cultural and historical roots of his early life. Vygotsky grew up in the Jewish tradition studying the biblical texts and Jewish history. He knew the Hebrew prayers and was fluent enough to write and deliver the Bar Mitzvah sermon in Hebrew (Kotik-Friedgut & Friedgut 2008:20).

the individual in the process of becoming virtuous. Third, educational intervention within the ZPD is always assumed to be helpful. Interventions could, however, be developmentally harmful. Bakhurst (2005) indicates a tendency to ignore the political Marxist context. Wertsch does insist that Vygotsky genuinely sought to ‘reformulate psychological theory along Marxist lines’ (1985:10) and suggests that Vygotsky’s genius was in part a product of an intellectually rich childhood and the early ferment of the Russian Revolution (1985:231).

### **Extending Vygotsky through MacIntyre’s Narrative Quest**

Vygotsky and Wertsch provide means to view human action with tools and signs in activity, revealing the social formation of mind. This process involves microgenetic analysis of development in scenes. Ontogenetic analysis can identify developmental changes in the lifetime of an individual. Vygotsky’s cultural historical genetic analysis can also trace changes in created artefacts over time. However, these analytical lenses provide only past and present perspectives for moral inquiry in this study.

A new hybrid with MacIntyre is required on two fronts. First, moral meaning must be connected through narrative. MacIntyre insists on virtues being embedded not only in practice(s) but also in the narrative unity of a human life. ‘The concepts of narrative, intelligibility and accountability’ and ‘personal identity’ all mutually presuppose one another (MacIntyre 2007:218). The question of the good is ‘to ask how best I might live out that unity *and bring it to completion*’ (MacIntyre 2007:218, italics added). A ‘narrative quest’ is necessary to provide unity in a moral life. Therefore, narrative is required to connect meaning in the present backwards through history, but also to connect meaning in the present forwards towards the future. For there to be a narrative quest, there must be some ‘conception of *the good*’ (MacIntyre 2007:219, italics in original). Only a teleological narrative in a tradition can answer the question of ultimate goodness. MacIntyre suggests that ‘A quest is always an education both as to

the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge' (2007:219). Asking what is good for a human being requires, in at least some part, a vision of the final *telos* of goodness.

Development inherently assumes some progressive direction. Vygotsky struggled to resolve and eventually 'ended up being ambivalent about the telos of human development' (Wertsch 1998:37). A reluctance to provide a teleological narrative for human development is evident in most of Vygotsky's followers (Stetsenko 2017:63).<sup>23</sup> Anna Stetsenko is one exception, but her description is somewhat general and open-ended. Avoiding predetermined outcomes in traditional teleology, she suggests that 'people envision the future to be a certain way, make commitment to this way, and thus bring it into realization' (Stetsenko 2017:200). This fails to offer the requirement of a tradition for virtue.

In this section, we see that although Vygotsky provides means to investigate human development through a genetic method, a new hybrid for moral inquiry requires a teleological narrative such as MacIntyre's narrative quest in a tradition. Another problem still to overcome is how to connect learning with social practice and identity formation in a community. Social learning theories provide theoretical resources to make this connection.

### **Learning through Legitimate Peripheral Participation**

Lave and Wenger's LPP concept grew out of engagement with apprenticeship and emerged as a refinement of 'situated learning' (1991:21-31). They became convinced that 'learning is an integral and inseparable aspect of social practice' and characterize learning as 'legitimate peripheral participation in communities of practice' (Lave &

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<sup>23</sup> Wertsch begins to use 'the analysis of historical narrative as a cultural tool for representing the past' (1998:180). Wertsch draws upon MacIntyre's theme of narrative and distinguishes between 'specific narratives' and 'schematic narrative templates'. He discusses how these arise in textbooks and history classrooms and compares and contrasts Soviet with post-Soviet as collective memory may change between generations. The focus remains historical (Wertsch 2004; 2008a).

Wenger 1991:31). Their theoretical lens focuses attention on social learning and learners participating with other practitioners in community. Movement from novice to mastering skills and knowledge is from the periphery towards fuller ‘participation in the sociocultural practices of a community’ (Lave & Wenger 1991:29). Learning, then, is a trajectory into a community of practice. Though made up of three words, Legitimate Peripheral Participation should be viewed as a compound term (Lave & Wenger 1991:35). LPP is described as ‘an analytical viewpoint on learning’ and ‘a historically, culturally concrete “concept”’ (Lave & Wenger 1991:39–40), not a theoretical abstraction of apprenticeship, nor a form of education or technique for teaching. Drawing on sociocultural and activity theory, theory formation itself would be viewed as a social practice.<sup>24</sup> Instead of the theory of practice, or theory and practice, Wenger-Trayner (2013) selects ‘The Practice of Theory’ to articulate the craft of theory production.

LPP also provides a vocabulary, a way of narrating meaning. In other words, it gives a way to tell stories about our experience of the world.

Legitimate Peripheral Participation provides a way to speak about the relations between newcomers and old-timers, and about activities, identities, artefacts, and communities of knowledge and practice. It concerns the process by which newcomers become part of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991:29).

To study how participants connect practices through narratives, language is not ‘a code for *talking about* the world’, but speech is ‘equally a means of *acting in* the world’; discourse production is not ‘a second-order representation of practice’ but is itself ‘a social and cultural practice’ (Hanks 1991:22, italics in original). This correlates with Vygotsky’s word as ‘one of the forms of action’ (1998:169), and MacIntyre’s claims that ‘utterances’ are ‘one class of deeds’ (1988:374).

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<sup>24</sup> LPP theory grew out of Lave and Wenger’s involvement with the Institute for Research on Learning, funded by the Xerox Foundation from 1987 to 1997, which had an aim to rethink learning. One of the drivers was the question of what false assumptions had been made about learning that gave rise to failed educational institutions (Wenger 2013).

LPP combines in one social practice theory framework the ‘theories of situated activity and theories about the production and reproduction of the social order’ (Lave & Wenger 1991:47). Rather than knowledge acquisition, this analytical view identifies changes in the identity of learners with respect to the world and their relations in it. Seeking to overcome the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, ‘it concerns the whole person acting in the world’ (Lave & Wenger 1991:49). Harry Daniels notes that one problem is how transfer takes place if the ‘situation’ is constantly emergent and therefore, elusive. Participationists argue against transfer taking place ‘within the head’. Humans shape and are shaped by their contexts, and an account is given of the ‘interweaving of mind and context over time’ (Daniels 2008:92–93). LPP enables a research lens that connects *learning* taking place in *social practices in a community* with *identity trajectories*, as novices move from the periphery of the CoP.

### **Wenger and Communities of Practice**

Wenger further develops his social learning theory around the concept of ‘Communities of Practice’ (CoP). CoPs emerge when

collective learning results in practices that reflect both the pursuit of our enterprise and the attendant social relations. These practices are thus the property of a kind of community created over time by the sustained pursuit of a shared enterprise (Wenger 1998:45).

For Wenger, practice is social and includes both the explicit and the tacit. Practice is a concept that incorporates

language, tools, documents, images, symbols, well-defined roles, specified criteria, codified procedures, regulations, and contracts that various practices make explicit for a variety of purposes. But it also includes all the implicit relations, tacit conventions, subtle cues, untold rules of thumb, recognizable intuitions, specific perceptions, well-tuned sensitivities, embodied understandings, underlying assumptions, and shared world views (Wenger 1998:47).

This definition is much more fluid than MacIntyre’s. Excellences or ‘internal goods’ are not included, nor is morality in a practice considered. Engaging in practice in the world is how we make meaning and ‘meaning is located in a process’ called ‘the *negotiation of meaning*’ (Wenger 1998:52, italics in original).

## **Participation and Reification**

Wenger identifies a single fundamental duality: *participation* and *reification*. His use of participation is similar to common usage, including both taking part in social enterprises and the relations with others as members in social communities (Wenger 1998:55).

Reification is: ‘the process of giving form to our experience by producing objects that congeal this experience into “thingness.”’ (Wenger 1998:58). Reification includes physical objects such as chairs, tables, documents and laptops, but also words such as democracy, liberty, and education. Both types are reifications, as is the process of making them. In a Vygotskian sense, these would be tools and signs which function as mediating artefacts. Reified verbal shortcuts can be powerfully evocative. Consider Martin Luther King’s phrase, ‘I have a dream!’ Participants in the civil rights movement are immediately reminded and swept up into far more than the literal four words.

Nevertheless, reification, detached from practice, can be seen as ‘an ironic substitute for what it was intended to reflect’ leading to cynicism (Wenger 1998:61). For example, ‘care in the community’ conjures up images of kindness and warmth but may be experienced as ‘no care’ for those suffering from mental health issues in the UK.

Participation and reification are complementary. They can make up for one another’s inherent limitations. For example, if you are not able to participate in a meeting, the reified object of minutes helps you to make meaning from the event. We have reified laws on the books, but lawyers and judges are required to participate in interpreting them. In a CoP, both reification and participation can intensify at the same time; they may be in tension. An example of tension would be attempting relaxed small group discussions in chairs bolted to the floor in a large lecture hall evidencing quite different approaches to education. Participating in a practice involves more than an embodied experience; it also involves reification by creating forms of meaning. Moreover, reification, as the process of articulating or producing a ‘thing’, gives



expression to existing meaning, but also new meanings are negotiated through participation. In this sense, the participation of people and the reification of things should be kept together to make meaning (Wenger 1998:63–71).

From Vygotsky, we see that reification involves the creation of artefacts, and participation involves human mediators. In a CoP, participants may have different trajectories within the community, but these may be observable in the mediation of different artefacts (reification). The tension and complementarity between reification and participation can prove a useful analysis. The research focus moves from defining specific practices or virtues and their boundaries to how patterns of practice in a community might be experienced. Members of the CoP are continually negotiating the meaning and object of their actions with each other. Although the intended goals of individuals and groups may shift and be varied, there is still some agreed shared enterprise for practice(s) within the CoP as a whole.

### **Modes of Belonging in Learning and Identity Formation**

Within the purview of ‘identity education’ (Schachter & Rich 2011), Wenger’s participationist approach makes sense of learning and identity formation by articulating three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment. *Engagement* is to be actively involved with others in mutual meaning making, so it includes shared histories of learning, mutual relationship, interactions, and practices. There is a bounded sense to engagement as the first mode of belonging. *Imagination* enables us to create images of the world and possibilities and see connections across time and space both in our individual and collective experience. *Alignment* is to coordinate our activities and motivations to contribute to broader structures and enterprises (Wenger 1998:173–175).

By engaging together and sharing in meaning making, participants in a CoP develop a *shared repertoire*. A repertoire ‘includes routines, works, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community

has produced or adopted' (Wenger 1998:83). These shared patterns in practice(s) help to define boundaries of a CoP. Competent membership arising from a shared history in a CoP allows '*negotiability of the repertoire*' (Wenger 1998:137, italics in original). Both the history and adjustments in the repertoire of the practice can be made newly meaningful. This offers a lens to consider how capability and legitimacy contribute to human mediation in shared practices, and how these may be used to reshape practices over time.

Several of the authors in Chapter One (Smith & Smith 2011; Smith 2013; Smith & Felch 2016; Glanzer et al. 2017) identify the role of imagination in affecting the sense or understanding of what we are doing in social practices closer to hand. Imagination here does not refer to escape into daydreams. It involves using images and metaphors to create a shared vision of the world and its possibilities, connecting our experiences and filling them with meaning across time and space. It is through a social or 'collective imagination' that we:

locate ourselves in the world and in history, and include in our identities other meanings, other possibilities, other perspectives ... we recognize our own experience as reflecting broader patterns, connections, and configurations ... we see our own practices as continuing histories that reach far into the past ... we conceive of new development, explore alternatives, and envision possible futures (Wenger 1998:178).

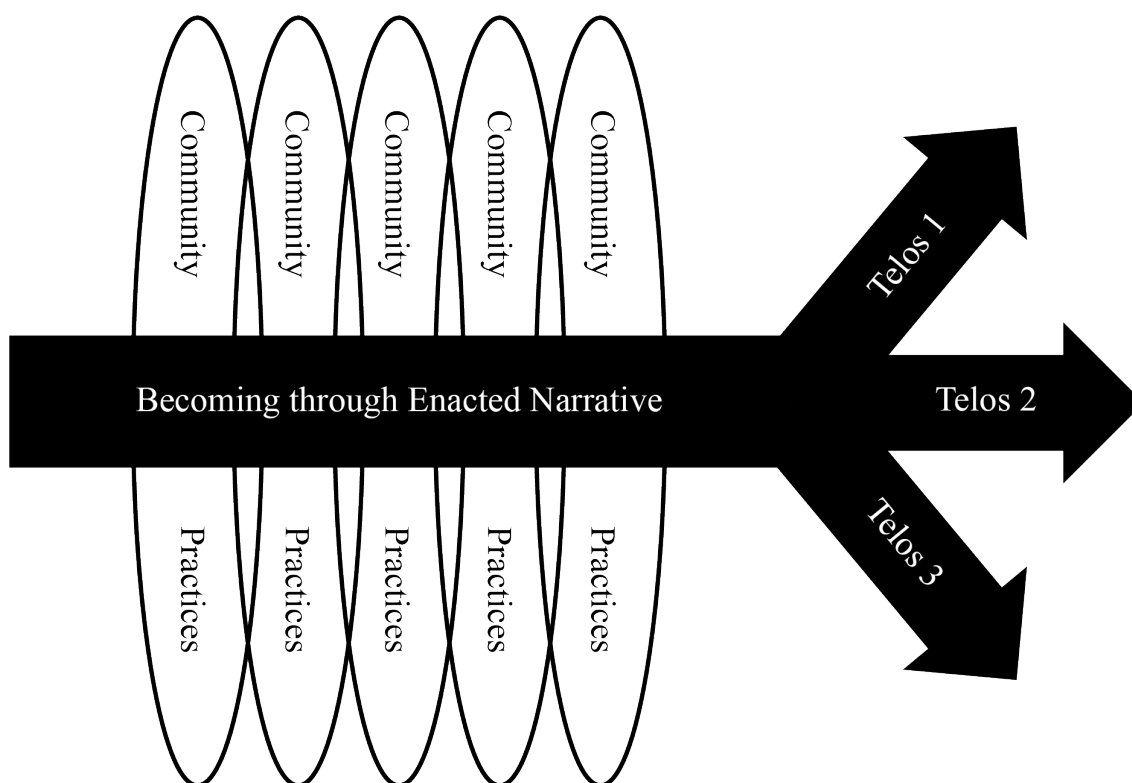
We will see, later in the data, different processes of social imagination participants use to make meaning as they step back and reflect on their engagement in activities. These processes include becoming self-aware as they see themselves in and through others, seeing possible changes and potential outcomes in their identity trajectory, sharing stories in which others inhabit their narratives, encountering practices, artefacts, and others who are 'foreign', and generating other possible futures for communities affected by their shared enterprise (Wenger 1998:185). Imagination enables us to position our practices and our identities and connect them in a broader context. Through this lens, we can examine the role of reification in producing signs and tools, and the individual and

social fluency with which they are used to create meaning through processes of imagination.

Identity formation exhibits constraints and patterns. Dorothy Holland demonstrates that narratives and identities are constructed and reconstructed within the ‘figured worlds’ of existing characters and genre (Holland et al. 1998). Identity formation is discussed further in Chapter Seven. In a CoP, a shared repertoire emerges, as does a collective imagination. These mutually shape one another as repertoire gives opportunity for imagination and imagination is embodied. Wenger’s account adds value because it can connect social practices in a community with learning and identity formation revealing how participation and reification are occurring.

Combining MacIntyre, Vygotsky, Wertsch, and Wenger provides a means to investigate the processes of becoming through enacted narratives in various CoPs. See Figure 2.3.

**Figure 2.3 Becoming Through Enacted Narrative**



The dislocation of leaving one community in order to enter a new CoP may itself be a powerful preparation for new learning and identity formation as an LPP. Wenger refers to constellations or landscapes of CoPs, and the continuity and discontinuities of the boundaries are both assets and liabilities (1998:256). We would do well to pay attention to these boundary spaces and the persons who can bridge or mediate them. The concepts of repertoire and imagination can be used to connect activities with Christian practices, opening space to consider them as transformative pedagogical practices in a learning community.

### **Practical Theological Reflections on Christian Practices in Education**

Theological resources are needed to connect activities with Christian practices. How can these activities be not only social practices but Christian practices? Practice theory and Wenger's CoP help us to see how imagination can make the connections, but additional resources can connect virtue formation with its cultural line of development in the Christian tradition. Resources in practical theology, such as works by Craig Dykstra and Dorothy Bass, offer an extended discussion of practices mostly expressed for worshipping congregations and theological education (Dykstra 1999; 2003; Dykstra & Bass 2002; Bass & Dykstra 2008; Bass 2010; Conner 2011). Drawing on MacIntyre, they define Christian practices as

things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental needs and conditions of humanity and all creation in the light of and in response to God's active presence for the life of the world in Jesus Christ (Dykstra & Bass 2010a:204).

While Christian practices are something 'Christian people do together over time', such as clusters of activities with a history, they can become much more than something we do. 'They become arenas in which something is done to us, in us, and through us that we could not of ourselves do, that is beyond what we do' (Dykstra 1999:56). These practices become formative in the same ordinary ways that socializing enculturating forces are powerfully and usually unconsciously at work in all areas of life.

Dykstra, however, argues that engaging in multiple Christian practices positions us to encounter ‘God’s active presence in the world in Jesus Christ’ (1999:63; Dykstra & Bass 2010a:204). The practices of the Christian faith are not primarily about our own efforts, but they become ‘habitations of the Spirit, in the midst of which we are invited to participate in the practices of God ... in the educating work of God’s Spirit among us and within us’ (Dykstra 1999:78). Hence Dykstra goes beyond MacIntyre’s claim that practices bear moral weight. He claims that engagement in practices can bring ‘awareness of certain *realities*’ (Dykstra 2003:172, italics in original). ‘Practices central to Christian life’ can bear epistemological weight in which ‘knowledge of God, of ourselves, and of the world; knowledge that is not only personal but also public’ emerges (Dykstra 2003:175). Perhaps it is here that learning communities can encounter new knowledge, as they become aware and participate in ‘the creative and redemptive activity of God in the world’ (Dykstra 2003:175).

Here we may well return to the question raised in Chapter One regarding the relationship of institutions of higher education to ecclesiastical communities in forming the moral life. ‘Religious communities, precisely because they bear within them a long, deep, rich, historical tradition attentive to ultimacy, have the capacity to provide the denser resources required for the formation of character and vision’ (Dykstra 1999:133).<sup>25</sup> Engagement in the social practices of late modernity is pervasive and mostly unconscious, and some of these practices may be deformative in terms of progressing towards a Christian *telos* of Christlike character and human flourishing. A

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<sup>25</sup> Sociocultural theorists rarely address religion, but two authors, Pablo del Río and Amelia Alvarez, recognize the robust psycho-cultural architecture that religions provide. ‘The medieval monastic architecture of oration plus activity (ora et labora) constitutes a powerful elaborate, and systematic psychological construction’ (Río & Alvarez 1995:236–37). They suggest three pillars upon which this architecture rests: 1) narration, 2) dialogicality in prayer, and 3) rituals/liturgy as the organizers of activity (Río & Alvarez 1995:238). Religion, as ‘one of the richest reserves of culturally directive architecture’, promotes ‘the social management of the cognitive’ instead of the recent dense external networks of the ‘rational bureaucratic action of institutional life’ and ‘technologized’ processes resulting in a ‘systematic remodeling of the foundation of consciousness by promoting a *cognitive management of social life*’ (Río & Alvarez 1995:239, italics in original).

counterformation could be legitimately, intentionally, and non-coercively pursued in higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian. Intentionality and desire may increase both the likelihood of engaging in practices and the power and direction of their formative effects. If that counterformation has a chance of being morally virtuous it will require engagement in a multiplicity of Christian practices, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and open to correction and reform by drawing on the resources of scripture and theology in a living tradition of Christian faith.

Practices named Christian can also be distorted, corrupted, and downright evil. No one can look deeply into Church history and claim moral superiority. More subtly, a recovery of Christian practices has been embraced as a ‘strategy of recuperation, repair, or reform’, but perhaps ‘Christian practices carry with them their own deformations’ (Winner 2018:180). It is often from those outside the tradition, or those who consider themselves damaged from within that corrective critique will come. Recalling MacIntyre, one means of interrogating moral goodness is to question not only the internal goods of the practice, not only the effect in an individual life but also the social effect in the light of the extension of goodness in the tradition. Christian practices will be considered further in Chapter Five as the activities and narratives of the DTS participants are connected and mapped onto more ancient and contemporary practices in the Christian tradition. Wisdom to reform and discern goodness in practices, in a life, and in a tradition would do well to be humble, ‘first of all pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere’ (James 3:17).

### **Human Telos in the Christian Tradition**

For theistic traditions, the moral vision of goodness extends beyond this life. In the Christian tradition, it is rooted in a Trinitarian theology and theological anthropology centred on Jesus of Nazareth, as the fullest revelation of what God is like and how

human beings are intended to be (Kotva 1996:86–93). It involves following and becoming more like Christ in attitudes, thoughts, words, and actions, being loved by God and learning to love God and others. Jennifer Herdt (2008) traces the historical arguments as to how this mimesis of Christ is approached and the tension between acquired and infused virtues. Herdt identifies a persistent Augustinian suspicion that acquired virtues, gained through ordinary social formation and human agency, are indeed ‘false virtues’ or ‘splendid vices’ which serve human pride and self-love. However, she notes how the view ‘that habituation in virtue takes place within the context of a community and its practices’ acknowledges dependency (Herdt 2008:350). If divine and human agency are not assumed to be mutually exclusive, we can grasp God at work in the social construction of Christlike character even as God’s activity draws us into divine relationship. Humans are created for good purposes and good works intended by the Father. It is a process initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit whose activity is to restore goodness. Ingrained patterns of selfishness and sin become visible in our lives and indicate the need for grace, forgiveness, and restoration on the journey.<sup>26</sup> One way to grasp the tension in this idealistic vision is by declaring the Kingdom of God as inaugurated and not yet fully here, viewing the eschatological horizon with hope but recognizing with realism the long view of human history.

This thesis cannot even begin to survey biblical theology from the view of virtue theory, but one problem should be addressed. MacIntyre offers a provisional second-stage account of the virtues as:

the good life for man is the life spent in seeking for the good life for man, and the virtues necessary for the seeking are those which will enable us to understand what more and what else the good life for man is (2007:219).

So the virtues are situated not only in practices but in the ‘good life for man’. This provides the first and second stage but lacks the third-stage requirement of a tradition.

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<sup>26</sup> All local communities are flawed, and it would be Utopian to expect otherwise, but MacIntyre does not consider it Utopian to seek to live by Utopian standards (1999:145).

Although MacIntyre indicates tradition's importance, his work does not offer a particular tradition's definition of human goodness, such as that provided by Christian theology. Mennonite theologian, Joseph Kotva, in the *Christian Case for Virtue Ethics* (1996) assists in clarifying some connections between New Testament scripture, goodness, and virtue theory. For example, the Gospel of Matthew emphasizes both inner qualities and overt action, the master/apprentice model is prevalent, and narrative is used to show the development of the disciples and their conflicting actions and words. Matthew offers a perfectionist ethic with Jesus as the true human, though an ethic that is not 'unrealistically idealistic' as Jesus is ready to forgive and rescue (Kotva 1996:106–7). The Sermon on the Mount is given to Jesus' disciples as an ethic to live by, and Jesus' call is to be perfect 'as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matthew 5:48). To be completely virtuous could be summarized as to do and feel the right things, in the right proportion, to the right people at the right time, for the right reasons. All voluntary human action is morally relevant, and humans are encouraged to improve as they become virtuous (Kotva 1996:37). A clinically depressed person might choose to do the right thing despite being incapable of feeling the right thing. Human capacities and limitations should be considered when assessing whether someone is acting virtuously. There is a type of perfectionism in teleological virtue ethics as it envisions human nature as it could be, but Christian virtue is not about mastery of technique. Rather than striving to become the prima ballerina, Christian virtue is more like joining in with others in country dancing. You make mistakes as you learn the forms and moves; you welcome others in while all paying attention to the caller and rhythm of the music.

Moral theologians and biblical exegetes often walk separate paths, but Harrington and Keenan (2002) worked together to address relevant ethical questions. In their book, *Jesus and Virtue Ethics*, moral theology and biblical exegesis are presented as parallel tracks. Love, identified as the primary virtue, involves loving God, self, and our



neighbours. Neighbours, as defined by Jesus, include our enemies. Mercy, reconciliation, and hope, required by these three loves, are initiated by God's love. Practising loving God, neighbour, and self, we join in 'the movement of God, who creates, redeems, sanctifies, and delivers us' (Harrington & Keenan 2002:88). Perhaps in knowing God and learning to love 'all that God loves' – even strangers and our enemies – humans reach their *telos* in bearing God's image and becoming like Christ (Hamalis & Papanikolaou 2013:276–77). In the Christian tradition, both East and West, the person and work of Jesus Christ and the indwelling Holy Spirit make this possible.

Similarly, theologian Tom Wright (2010) argues for a reading of the New Testament that announces God's future reign is already arriving in Jesus. We can practise now the lifeways and habits which find their *telos* in that coming future. The ultimate human *telos* is ruling as a royal priesthood in God's kingdom, a communal *telos* of the people of God. Rather than Aristotle's *eudaimonia* which is self-achieved happiness, Jesus emphasizes *makarios* (blessedness) in the Sermon on the Mount, a *telos* that depends upon 'the loving action of the Creator God' (Wright 2010:90–91). This does not mean that no effort is required. Because God's power has been given to live a godly life, the instruction in 2 Peter 1:5 is to 'make every effort to add to your faith, virtue [*aretē*], and to virtue, knowledge'. Through human image-bearers, God reveals his character and ways, giving not primarily a set of moral rules but things to do and speak as agents of God's mission in the world. Becoming fully human, becoming who Christians are called to be in the likeness of Christ in the future, involves faith and visionary hope. However, it also requires the hard work of putting Jesus' teaching into practice and following his call to be disciples in the present. These intermediate steps bridge who we are with who we are becoming. The Christian tradition offers specific, although contested, visions of the human *telos* and the means to pursue it through formation.

## **Moral Development as Virtue Formation in the Christian Tradition**

If moral development is to become virtue formation in the Christian tradition, specifically Christian practices and narratives must be joined in a community with a Christian *telos*. In this thesis ‘development’ and ‘formation’ are used frequently. Development, in Vygotsky’s usage, carries with it some of the Enlightenment and scientific positivist undertones of his time. There is a progressive aspect in light of the Marxist historical dialectic, so prevalent within his thinking, that assumes human history is advancing, albeit not in a straight line. Formation, in my usage, is connected with an understanding that the shaping taking place through social participation is not necessarily progressive towards more advanced levels of integration, nor indeed towards virtue. Virtue could be replaced with vice, and we could discuss vice formation.

Vygotsky embraced monism and a materialist philosophy (Veresov 2005:34). The Christian tradition assumes more than the social and material is at work. Virtue formation in the Christian tradition always requires ‘much more than human effort and actions under our control’ (Willard 2002:23). Although it involves these and indeed the interactions of the social, cultural, and historical in practices, formation in Christian virtue refers to a ‘*Spirit-driven*’ process (Willard 2002:22, italics in original). It is not necessary to assume that this belief is true to acknowledge the research value in presenting the participants’ self-understanding. The participants in this study consistently narrate social relations and interpersonal dialogue with God. Chapter Three presents the methodology which allows us to attend to ‘hearing God’s voice’. Participants’ own understanding of what is taking place in both intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogues in ‘hearing God’s voice’ is presented as an example of a mediational means.<sup>27</sup> These dialogues and speech utterances will be attended to as

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<sup>27</sup> An excellent example using an ethnographic approach is *When God Talks Back* (2012) by psychological anthropologist T. M. Luhrmann. Her study of the Vineyard Church uses a very different methodology in a different field, but it does provide an excellent cultural-historical backdrop for understanding certain aspects of this research and particularly the references to ‘hearing God’s voice’.

phenomenological data and will be considered as potential sources of explanatory force in interpretation as the understanding of the participants is investigated.

The fluency of use and the meaning of cultural signs and tools in mediated action can be deepened as they are engaged in by participation in activity systems. Potentially this indicates the need for Christian learning communities to particularly pay attention to ‘mediational means’ by facilitating narrative tools and opportunities to engage in Christian practices creatively in new contexts. In this way, MacIntyre’s philosophical framework is deepened through Vygotsky’s understanding of how ‘mediating means’ not only move from the external social to the internal plane in cultural transmission but also how they move out again to shape the world through ‘*collaborative purposeful transformation*’ (Stetsenko 2009:9, italics in original). Vygotsky was ‘reorganizing the whole national system of education and devising special rehabilitation programs for homeless and handicapped children’, real-world problems that required deep moral commitments (Stetsenko 2004:503). Potential transformative learning contexts are prevalent at borders between different communities, and individuals learning to acquire and use mediational tools with a degree of freedom may lead to change in society. Linking the use of cultural tools with collaborative Christian practices in pursuit of social and individual change helps us see how learning and virtue formation can be investigated in the process of becoming.

## **Conclusion**

For now, it appears that MacIntyre’s philosophical framework for virtue formation involving a particular tradition, practices, and the narrative order of a human life along with *telos* and virtue could indeed be deepened and extended through Vygotsky and his followers. This combination results in a fresh hybrid theoretical framework. The methodology and tools of genetic analysis and analysis of mediated action in a ZPD enable focused investigation of the intermediate steps. Lave and Wenger’s LPP and CoP

offer a means to connect learning and identity formation as we pay attention to engagement, imagination, and alignment in processes of reification and participation. We can research desires, habits, moral imperatives, and prohibitions that enable us as humans to journey from *human-nature-as-it-is* to *human-nature-as-it-could be* (Kotva 1996:17; Kallenberg 2003:11) in their processes of becoming. These theoretical resources will be used to investigate the processes of human mediating action that may contribute to moral virtue formation. As the cultural tools appear and transform from the external social processes of the intermental plane through the internal intramental plane, they can be transformed outward again and appropriated and adapted in mediated action to shape ourselves and the world with a degree of freedom. For moral inquiry, virtue must be considered at several levels: the practice, the narrative unity of the individual life, and the extension of a tradition in light of its *telos*. Resources in practical theology in the Christian tradition have been offered for this purpose. Although in the Christian tradition all goodness and virtue are dependent upon God's goodness, appropriating these indirect means of grace may increase the freedom to receive and be led by the Spirit in pursuing God's mission, revealing Christlikeness in the world. The theoretical framework informs the research design, data gathering, and data analysis in Chapter Three.



## **Chapter Three**

### **Methodology, Theory, and Data: Connecting and Negotiating Meaning**

#### **Introduction**

With the theoretical framework now in place, this chapter turns to the research design, data gathering, and data analysis. After restating the research questions, I explain why multiple case studies of individual DTS participants were used for this narrative interpretive inquiry. The focus is not on individuals and individual change in isolation, but on the genetic analysis of that change over time within the systems of which they are a part. By selecting dramatic episodes from multiple perspectives, a richer and potentially more reliable narrative is constructed. The narrative order holds together the sociocultural tension between individual mediated action and the institutional and community practices in their contexts. Examples are given of data analysis, such as coding, and the basis for case study selection. Four types of participant expertise contribute to the study's verification and validity. The research asks: *Quo vadis?* Where are individual and collective lives going? The methodology enables investigation of participants' understanding of the closely intertwined trajectories of learning and identity formation as they pursue goodness together. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethics and the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher.

#### **The Research Problem**

As noted in Chapter One, research in higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian has struggled to provide accounts of moral formation from the understanding and viewpoint of participants in the learning communities. Communities of worship, 'prayer, learning, and labor' (MacIntyre 2007:xvi), such as those composing the UofN DTS, not only possess narratives that express a spiritual pursuit but also perform embodied practices that seek to revitalize individuals and communities (Miller & Yamamori 2007; Miller 2013). This is an example of twenty-first-century monasticism described broadly by Keenan (2002), with some similarities to new monastic

communities more narrowly expressed (see Rutba House 2005; Harrold 2010; Wilson 2010; Peters 2014; Bede 2015; Markofski 2015; Palmisano 2015). An ‘intellectual puzzle’ (Mason 2002) to investigate was the UofN DTS participants’ understandings of how the narratives and embodied practices changed and affected them as the community moved towards virtuous living. The phenomenon involved human actors as moral selves in communities whose thinking, attitudes, and behaviour mutually influence one another, even as they come to embody the narratives of their shared tradition. I wanted to investigate moral formation in the process of becoming. Participants’ understandings expressed in narratives of engagement in practices contribute to knowledge of self, others, God, and the world in ways in which the processes of becoming good together can be investigated.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question was:

How do participants (students, staff, and leaders) in the University of the Nations Discipleship Training School (UofN DTS) understand the interaction of their embodied practices and narratives, and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtue formation?

The specific research sub-questions were:

1. How might DTS activities, which participants narrate as impactful, be linked to Christian practices?
2. How do DTS participants understand a good learning community?
3. How do participants appropriate mediational tools which may enable virtues to form?
4. How do participants’ learning processes and identity trajectories interact and change through the DTS?

The focus of the investigation came to be how participants understood the activities of the DTS impacted them and to use sociocultural theories to seek to explicate and narrate that understanding in the sociocultural historical context.

### **Research Approach: Qualitative Interpretive Inquiry**

Contemporary qualitative interpretive inquiry is a contested field. What was once primarily a discourse of justification of interpretive depth against the perceived domination of quantitative research in a positivist world has become multiple interpretive communities, often in conflict with one another. However, Denzin and Lincoln claim a single agreed upon, albeit shifting, centre in the field of qualitative research: ‘the humanistic and social justice commitment to study the social world from the perspective of the interacting individual’ (2018:xvi). As well as keeping a focus on ‘participants’ meanings’, another common core characteristic in qualitative research is ‘emergent design’ (Creswell 2014:186). Initially planned and intentional, the research design became emergent through an iterative process of engaging with social learning theories while gathering and making meaning of the data.

Whereas once it was insisted that the method must align with the methodology and the philosophical paradigm, there is now an argument for selecting methods which provide useful insights regardless of their origins in different philosophical perspectives. Bricolage involves ‘methodological processes as they are needed in the unfolding context of the research situation’ (Kincheloe et al. 2013:350). It is still expected that researchers justify the selection as methodological bricoleurs and reflexively locate themselves and the research participants. The researcher becomes a ‘key instrument’ in data gathering (Creswell 2014:185). I would identify myself as a critical realist with a limited and particular perspectival view on a world that truly exists (Harré 2002; Bhaskar 2008). This allows for an interpretive approach as reality can only be very partially grasped as the researcher works with participants’ accounts of their



experiences and understandings in qualitative interviews in dialogue with theories of social reality (Edwards & Holland 2013:22). The researcher is also a participant whose knowledge and values are inherent in all stages of the research. The research paradigm became pragmatic.

The pragmatic paradigm and researcher reflexivity can cover multiple ontological and epistemological cracks when approaching a research problem. In this sense, qualitative interpretive inquiry became a performance in problem-solving. It involved interpreting a phenomenon through the lens of the participants' understanding but also used theory and tools to explicate and critique the processes investigated. Qualitative research 'consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible' (Denzin & Lincoln 2018:10). I accept that these interpretations are historically situated and culturally derived. There is also a socially constructive angle; meanings are made and negotiated as activities of human minds expressed through material practices. Engaging in these interpretive practices, I have produced representations of the world in recordings, transcripts, field notes, a research journal, archival documents, photographs, charts and diagrams, and eventually, in the narrative construction of a PhD thesis. All of these reifications (cultural artefacts) are an attempt to display mind in activity. The thesis presents multiple perspectives of the complex processes of moral virtue formation and sketches a larger holistic picture (Creswell 2014:186). Aiming to portray a 'truth-filled' or 'reliable' account, it, nevertheless, reflects a particular perspective. That account is not limited to, but more likely to resonate with, those who share a particular traditioned perspective.

### **Case Study as Research Strategy**

Case study emerged as an early contender as a research design. Flyvbjerg (2013) prefers a straightforward definition of case study, quoting from Merriam-Webster's dictionary (2009), as: 'an intensive analysis of an individual unit (as a person or community)

stressing developmental factors in relation to environment'. He seeks to correct misunderstandings about case study, the first being that, 'general, theoretical knowledge is more valuable than concrete case knowledge' (Flyvbjerg 2013:171). Flyvbjerg argues that 'phenomenological studies of the learning process' indicate that humans become experts by operating with extensive knowledge of 'concrete cases', not solely by training in 'context-independent knowledge and rules'. This development from 'rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts' is accompanied by an understanding that all knowledge in human affairs is 'context-dependent' (Flyvbjerg 2013:172–73). Yin (2014) presents a twofold definition of case study, also indicating it as an appropriate choice. This inquiry 'investigates a contemporary phenomenon' taking place in a complex 'real-world context' over which there is little control, and the 'boundaries between phenomenon and context' are 'not clearly evident' (Yin 2014:16). The second part of Yin's definition points towards 'multiple sources of evidence' and the benefit of prior theorising 'to guide data collection and analysis' (2014:17).

It took time to decide whether it would be a single case study of DTS as a prerequisite programme for Christian formation in the UofN globally, multiple case studies of DTSs in Europe, or indeed multiple case studies of individual participants in DTS. Revisiting and revising the research questions led to greater clarity that the focus of the study was individuals (Miles & Huberman 1994:25–26). Therefore, I decided to use multiple individual case studies to investigate how participants' moral formation may be taking place in a UofN DTS. Because of the value placed on participants' understandings, an interpretive narrative inquiry approach flows through the case study design. The participants' accounts are privileged in both the design and analysis, and the data is presented as an 'account of accounts' (Cohen et al. 2011:445). Although case study research addresses complex social phenomena, it follows a 'linear but iterative process' (Yin 2014:1). Increasing familiarity with sociocultural and activity theories

guided stages of data gathering and analysis, by turning attention to activities, mediational tools and signs, the interaction of participation and reification, and the negotiation of meaning and identity in brokering boundary crossings.

In the early stages, I gained research access by contacting gatekeepers, began visiting DTS sites, developed participant information sheets and consent forms, and interviewed DTS participants and international UofN DTS leaders from multiple locations. Recognizing the need to address construct validity, I also sought other forms of evidence such as DTS student journals, archived institutional documents and curriculum, and the input of experts in Christian formation and discipleship. Simultaneously, I was preparing myself as a researcher by testing interview protocols, developing interview skills, and beginning to gather data. Preparation and early data gathering fed back into adjusting the design in an iterative process that included interaction with academics and literature in sociocultural activity theory. Analysis of data was ongoing. Using NVivo12 to code the data and establish a chain of evidence (Yin 2014:127), I began to triangulate the gathered data. Analytic techniques included: repeatedly listening to, reading, and summarizing interviews; pattern matching, noting changes in narratives over time; several methods of coding analysis; a dialectical approach to practices from the institutional and participant view; the re-construction of narratives with a dialogical approach; and testing interpretations by reading and discussing with colleagues. These analytical techniques reinforced the synthesis of the cases to demonstrate how individuals in the DTS CoP appropriate mediational tools that may enable virtues to form and how learning is intertwined with identity trajectories.

Initially, case studies of individuals from different UofN DTS communities were constructed. However, for a longitudinal design, cases from one DTS location were selected for this thesis. Units of analysis, such as Wertsch's mediated action, were embedded in the cases. Evidence for the role of mediation in introducing theoretical

knowledge in a ZPD was also considered. Acknowledging Lave and Wenger's perspective – that both learning and identity development are closely intertwined processes of participation in social practices – suggested a longitudinal design in a CoP.

The study aimed to elicit participants' views and expressed practice to gain an in-depth perspective using semi-structured interviews. See Annex One for a list of the interview questions. The theoretical resources informed these questions. For example, MacIntyre's teleological narrative quest informed questions such as: *What kind of person would you like to become? Who do you want to be six months from now?* Questions soliciting descriptions of goodness, a good person, a good example in the community, or a good learning community integrated both sociocultural and virtue theory to draw out participants' use of mediational signs to express understandings of 'good'. Some questions were informed by sociocultural theory and practical theology and sought connections between activities in the DTS that participants found impactful and scripture. Wenger's notions of engagement, imagination, and alignment informed the question: *If you could gather a group of people to do something good for the world, what would you do?* To collect data about changes in identity over time, participants were asked: *If you were to finish the sentence, [Interviewee name] is ..., how would you finish it?* Vygotsky's emphasis on investigating processes of becoming and Wertsch's mediated action were combined with virtue theory and practical theology in the two-stage questions: *If you were to tell me about one or two vices that you are seeking to overcome, what would you tell me about? What do you understand to be the steps or process of changing from those vices?*

Other sources of data for the cases included the analysis of UofN documents and promotional videos and interviews with UofN leaders and staff to build an understanding of the type of institution or landscape of learning communities the UofN claims to be. DTS locations in ten countries in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East

were visited over a four-and-a-half-year period. UofN DTS curriculum examples and my own experience of multiple DTSSs were drawn upon to seek to pattern match activities recorded in DTS and those expressed by interviewees with practices considered central in the Christian tradition by practical theologians.

I verified my research by frequent discussions of the practices of Christian formation with 32 Masters candidates and staff in the UofN, each of whom had at least seven years of discipleship experience. I triangulated data sources and analysis methods throughout, rather than only at the final analysis stage, to map the activities of the DTS onto Christian practices. These Masters candidates engaged in Christian practices and presented their understanding of practices, including practices in the DTS. I relied on social learning theories to analyse the case study evidence as to how participants were negotiating meaning, appropriating mediation tools and the effect on identity and moral purpose. I sought to consider rival explanations to build an explanatory model using analytic generalization at a conceptual level (Yin 2014:68). Interacting with participants in the UofN Masters in Christian Formation and Discipleship who had extensive experience in UofN DTSSs around the world and allowing experts and research colleagues to read and critique my evidence, explanations, and conclusions provided tests of construct validity and internal validity (Yin 2014:45). Presentations of my research and discussions with the International DTS Centre (IDTSC) Core Team coincided with the reframing of the UofN international DTS curriculum towards increased attention to corporate and individual Christian practices and the weaving of the biblical narrative (God's story) with participants' narratives of their own lives.

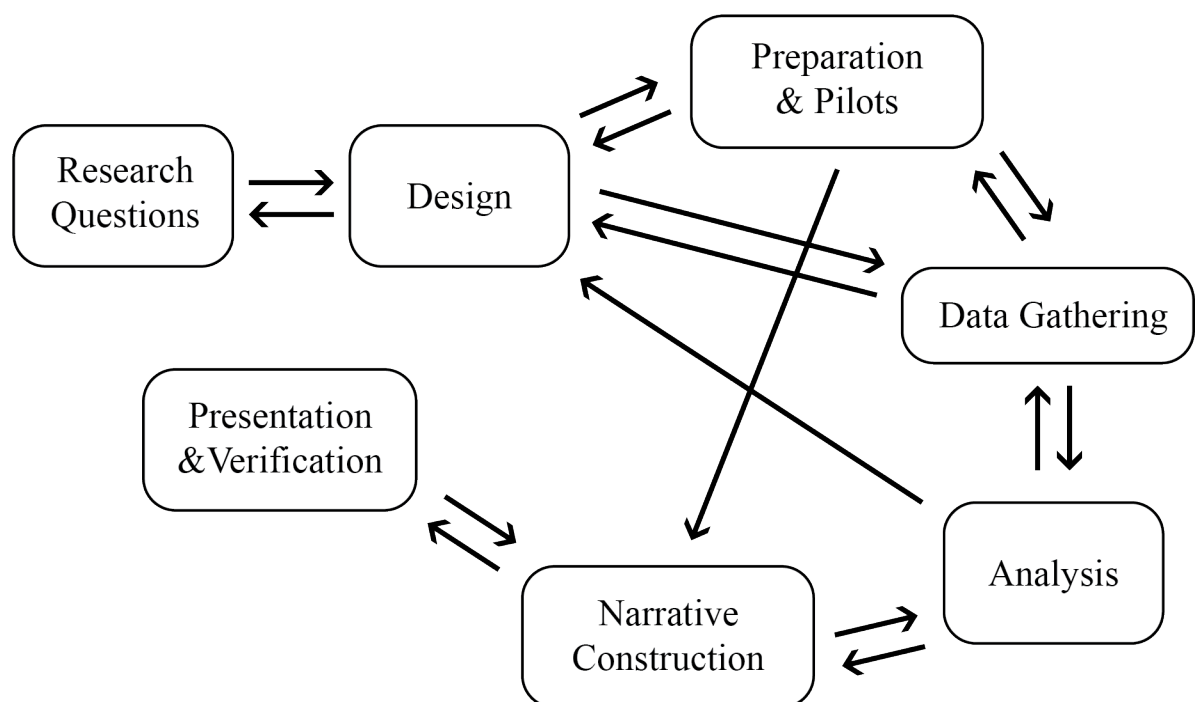
Nevertheless, the complexity of individual cases, their contexts, and indeed suggested interventions, such as the introduction of theoretical knowledge by human mediators, mean that challenges of validity and analytic generalization in these case studies must be recognized (Yin 2013). However, Flyvbjerg argues with examples that

analytic generalization can be achieved based on a single case, even though ‘formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development, whereas “the force of example” and transferability are underestimated’ (2013:179). I do not suggest that the case studies presented can be statistically generalizable across DTS populations.

Nevertheless, the case studies elucidate practices, narratives, and processes, which those with expertise verify as reliable accounts according to their experience and knowledge of multiple DTSs. Strengths of case study include understanding the context and processes with potentially ‘high conceptual validity’, but weaknesses include unknown statistical significance in the population and selection bias resulting in overstating or understating conceptual relationships (Flyvbjerg 2013:198).

Figure 3.1 depicts an overview of the research strategy.

**Figure 3.1 Research Strategy Overview**



Adapted from (Flyvbjerg 2006; 2013; Srivastava & Hopwood 2009; Stake 2003; Yin 2013; 2014)

### **Research Context**

The sociocultural tradition is unified by its goal to take into consideration the essential relationship of human mental processes and the ‘cultural, institutional, and historical

context' (Wertsch 1998:3). Methods to give an account of this relationship vary along a continuum of seeing individuals and context as completely inseparable to seeing the value in using distinct methods of analysis to address the self as a historical subject part of, but separable and distinguishable from purely sociological processes in a context (Daniels 2008:52–7). The sociocultural approach opposes 'methodological individualism', which in experimental psychology would view virtues as measurable variables and properties of individuals. Engeström's Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) emphasizes the processes, activities, interventions, and internal contradictions (accumulating tensions) in activity systems but avoids changes in individuals as a unit of analysis (2001; 2007). However, my research diary indicated that I wanted to 'retain a focus on the individual'. Clarifying the unit(s) of analysis (whether local UofN learning community, a single DTS community, leaders and staff and their mediation in DTS, or the participants engaging in a practice or practices) seemed essential to clarify the research context. Nevertheless, social learning theorists Lave and Wenger make strong claims of inseparability as 'agent, activity, and the world mutually constitute each other' (1991:33). Social practice is viewed as 'the primary, generative phenomenon, and learning is one of its characteristics' (1991:34). This suggested that research on learning to become virtuous persons was inseparable from the participatory framework and context. Rather than merely transmitting a set of universal beliefs or virtuous traits to individuals, reproduction of virtue in persons was likely to involve passing on and maintaining participatory practices. How could persons be distinguished from context?

This question seemed critical in seeking to deepen MacIntyre's virtue theory framework by employing methods afforded by sociocultural theory. MacIntyre distinguishes conceptually between tradition, institution, community, practices, and individual narrative (2007:218). Wertsch insists that the 'sociocultural approach to mind

begins with the assumption that action is mediated and that it cannot be separated from the milieu in which it is carried out' (1991:18). Although it cannot be separated, understanding how persons appropriate mediational tools that may enable virtues to form can be traced through genetic analysis. In effect, this allows for methods which seek to understand the historical origins and transitions of individual human development situated in cultural contexts. Bruner indicates that 'learning and thinking are always *situated* in a cultural setting and always dependent upon the utilization of cultural resources' (1996:4, italics in original) expressing the essence of the methodological challenge. Different cultural contexts provide different opportunities for appropriating mediational tools and affect individual and social variation.

Therefore, I decided to demonstrate the institution, communities, and practices as the context in Chapters Four and Five to enable the microgenetic and ontogenetic analysis in Chapters Six and Seven. Even though 'individual and cultural processes are mutually constituting rather than defined separately from each other' (Rogoff 2003:51), different levels of developmental analysis can be used to think helpfully about them. Sociocultural theorists overcome the problem of the inseparability thesis in empirical research by accepting a methodology of analytic separability in practice (Sawyer 2002). The UofN DTS context is demonstrated through cultural-historical analysis of institutional documents, interviews with leaders, community observations in site visits, and by a dialectical analysis of institutional and individual views which enables the mapping of DTS activities onto practices in the Christian tradition. DTS participants' composite understanding of a good learning community is constructed from coding analysis. The unity of individual lives is held together in the narrative even as microgenetic and ontogenetic analysis is used to reflect on changes which the person understands to be taking place. All of this reveals how learning and identity formation



are intertwined and depend upon the appropriation of available tools and signs and the construction of teleological identity narratives of becoming.

### **Gathering the Data**

An initial focus group was intended to discover how participants might understand concepts such as virtue, goodness, and a good person or exemplar. The focus group of 14 participants had spent six months together during a DTS. I hoped to discover shared language to craft interview questions. The focus group was too large, with a weakness that the more dominant voices tended to be agreed with (Cohen et al. 2011:436–37). It was difficult to track who was speaking; I would have benefitted from an additional researcher. The focus group did indicate that ‘virtue’ was not commonly used or understood. I decided that focus groups, although yielding some information about participants’ understanding of goodness and exemplars, were not likely to give the data I was seeking.

As well as initial individual semi-structured interviews, I facilitated five interviews that engaged two or three participants at a time. These interviews were more revealing, highly interactive, and included examples of ‘inhabiting’ one another’s narratives as they expressed how activities in the DTS had impacted them. The interviews at the end of DTS sensitized me to how participants’ encounters with those considered as ‘other’, such as refugees, were leading to expressions of change in participants’ views of themselves and others. New understanding appeared to emerge, similar to *phronesis*, as participants negotiated between engagement in Christian practices and their responses to the refugee crises.

Reflecting again on my methodology, I recognized the weakness of relying primarily on one-shot post-experience interviews. I chose another DTS site location to allow for a series of three interviews at six-month intervals. I was broadly trying to

follow Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model of Process, Person, Context, and Time<sup>1</sup>, introducing the element of time. The decision to interview at the beginning of the DTS, six months later at the end of the DTS, and six months after the DTS was justified in that interviews are an intervention which could affect participants' understanding. After three months, participants are usually excited about outreach, which could produce inflated results. Six-month interviews enabled inquiry about activities or experiences that participants understood as impactful or leading to change using the same time interval. Bronfenbrenner's bioecological model of human development with proximal processes occurring between the individual and other persons, objects, and symbols in the context over time informed research with these participants. This introduced a longitudinal design to data gathering.

### **Research Access**

Research access involved contacting colleagues directly or requesting access indirectly through a mutual friend. More than 30 years in the movement meant that I was welcomed as an insider, or granted access based on informal email and social media

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<sup>1</sup> Bronfenbrenner updated his bioecological paradigm towards the end of his life in two propositions.

*Proposition 1* Especially in its early phases, and to a great extent throughout the life course, human development takes place through processes of progressively more complex reciprocal interaction between an active, evolving biopsychological human organism and the persons, objects, and symbols in its immediate environment. To be effective, the interaction must occur on a fairly regular basis over extended periods of time. Such enduring forms of interaction in the immediate environment are referred to as *proximal processes*. Examples of enduring patterns of proximal process are found in parent-child and child-child activities, group or solitary play, reading, learning new skills, studying, athletic activities, and performing complex tasks (Bronfenbrenner 1995a:620).

Bronfenbrenner's second proposition reveals the 'three-fold source of these dynamic forces' (1995a:620).

*Proposition 2* The form, power, content, and direction of the proximal processes effecting development vary systematically as a joint function of the biopsychological characteristics of the developing person; of the environment, both immediate and more remote, in which the processes are taking place; and the nature of the developmental outcomes under consideration (Bronfenbrenner 1995a:621).

This PPCT research design would allow for simultaneous investigation of processes, persons, and their interaction with other persons and mediational tools in their environmental context over time.

exchanges. After arranging dates of visits, the participant information sheets and consent forms were explained, and agreement to the research was confirmed. See Annexes Five and Six. I had access to sites, to staff and students, and to living in the communities as a guest and researcher. Sites provided various levels of assistance and flexibility. For example, in one location, it was ‘debriefing week’ towards the end of the DTS. The site had sensitive security issues as they accommodated 30 teenage Muslim refugees. Understandably, I was asked not to take photographs of these residents or their living quarters. I also chose not to interview them as they were not participants in the DTS, even though they shared meals and living and working spaces. This choice was to avoid both security and ethical risks arising from researching refugee minors.

### **Access to Sites**

I was given wide access to multiple locations. These sites varied from a rural English manor house, two large residential former orphanages, rented houses and church halls in large cities, and purpose-built multi-residential educational campuses. The architecture of the sites affects the human processes which take place within them. Granted freedom to visit anywhere, I respected boundaries of dorm rooms and private apartments but was sometimes personally invited in. As Stake says, ‘Qualitative researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world’ (2003:154). I avoided gathering personal data during those visits unless I expressly indicated that I was doing so. The observations of these shared, but private, spaces did deepen my understanding of the lived context of the community. Accommodation for sleeping, eating, and living was usually shared. Couples and families had private rooms or apartments, but most students and short term staff lived and slept in shared rooms without a private bathroom or kitchen. See Table 3.1 for the dates and sites visited during the period of research.

**Table 3.1 UofN DTS Sites Visited**

Location	UofN DTS Site	Dates
England	HaDTS	25-28 Feb 2014
		17-21 Nov 2014
		16-20 Mar 2015
	CaDTS	20-22 Jan 2015 27-30 Apr 2015
	HmDTS	30 Mar - 1 Apr 2015 27-30 Sep 2015
Netherlands	AmDTS	12-14 March 2015
Switzerland	BuDTS	1-13 Nov 2015
		11-27 Feb 2016
Germany	NuDTS	1-3 Mar 2016
Northern Ireland	RoDTS	6-12 Oct 2016
		12-18 Mar 2017
Norway	GrDTS	7-17 Nov 2016
	SkDTS	18-27 Apr 2017
Croatia	CrDTS	4-8 Apr 2018
Rwanda	KiDTS	3-8 Aug 2015
Uganda	JiDTS	28 Oct 2017
Middle East	MeDTS	29 Oct - 5 Nov 2017

**Access to Document Data**

Some of the data regarding YWAM/UofN is in the public domain, such as published books and website content, as cited in this thesis. This includes current data such as the DTS curriculum and the UofN Catalogue. I also had access to changes in these reified objects over time. For example, the DTS curriculum has undergone significant changes in organization, presentation, and content. I was included in discussions regarding the most recent change, named ‘Reframing the DTS Curriculum’. This was due to my involvement in leading the UofN Masters in Christian Formation and Discipleship with one cohort near Geneva, Switzerland and the other near Cape Town, South Africa. Several of my colleagues and Masters candidates were also leaders of the IDTSC and tasked with maintaining the quality of the DTS worldwide.

International UofN records of location-specific, historical DTSs were not separate from individual data, and my request for access was denied due to data privacy laws. Each DTS location is registered every three years, with a sample DTS course

curriculum submitted and approved. The speakers and curriculum of each completed DTS are also recorded in individual learning weeks with the UofN. Although this did not seriously affect my research, it removed one source of data. I had access to other internal documents, including UofN catalogues, Reference Guides, Workshop Resources, and my notes and correspondence. Cited as sources when expressly referred to in the thesis, many more contributed to an overall understanding.

### **Access to People**

International leaders in the UofN/DTS were very willing to be interviewed. In most locations, I had access to any participant in the learning community. Often assistance was given, explaining who I was, the purpose of the research, setting up interview schedules, and welcoming me to participate in activities. I did not, however, request to participate in small group meetings. From my previous experience, the presence of a researcher could prove detrimental to levels of trust and intimate sharing. I sometimes heard about the small groups or one-on-ones and what they had talked about and done through informal conversation or interviews.

In Germany, with Muslim refugees in the YWAM community, staff selected several DTS students and made a public request for additional staff and students to volunteer for interviews. In Northern Ireland, nearly every DTS student agreed to be interviewed, although as shown in Oral Sources, 3 of the 20 were unavailable for the third interview.

### **Four Types of Participant Expertise**

Four different types of participant expertise were identified in the process of data gathering. The trainees (students), who could be described as LPPs, possess expertise in which they reflect on their everyday experience of the UofN DTS and how the CoP they have entered is influencing their lives. This understanding, gained from 33 participants, is the primary focus of this study and identified as Type 1 expertise.

The second type involved ten participants, local DTS leaders and staff, who have prior experience of at least one DTS as a trainee. Their current position means their expertise could reflect multiple perspectives, including their own, previous fellow trainees, and the perspectives of fellow staff and current trainees. This expertise, identified as Type 2, is close-to-practice as staff and leaders fully engage with student activities and in staff reflection.

The third type arises from international UofN/DTS leaders who have been involved with multiple DTSSs and have an institutional responsibility to maintain the quality of DTS regionally or internationally. This expertise is both broad and deep, offering recognition of patterns and critical elements for the DTS. Full participation in an entire DTS may have been years ago, but international leaders are still engaging in the CoP of DTSSs as lecturers and by training staff and leaders. DTS lecturers usually eat and live in the same building with students and staff during their week of teaching on a DTS. This is considered part of YWAM/UofN's Live/Learn value. International DTS leaders also engage in curriculum approval and development at the international level. Seven international leaders were interviewed with Type 3 expertise.

Finally, the fourth type was gathered from 32 Masters candidates and staff in Christian Formation and Discipleship. They have experience of multiple UofN DTSSs in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, North America, South America, and Australasia/Oceania. Seven years of engagement in discipleship ministry is a prerequisite for entry into the Masters programme. Type 4 expertise aided the evaluation of evidence from extensive discipleship and diverse cultural experiences and allows interpretation and reflections from wider academic study. See Table 3.2.

**Table 3.2 Participants and their Expertise**

Type 1. Trainees (students) reflect on their everyday experience of the UofN DTS and their understanding of how it influences their lives	33 participants
Type 2. Leaders and Staff of the UofN DTS have prior experience of DTS (at least once as a trainee) and current experience potentially reflecting on it from multiple perspectives	10 participants
Type 3. International UofN/DTS Leaders have expert experience of multiple UofN DTSs over many years and have institutional responsibility to maintain quality and oversee DTS programmes regionally or globally	7 participants
Type 4. Masters Candidates and Christian Formation Educators have broad experience of multiple UofN DTSs and other forms of discipleship internationally and can evaluate evidence and interpretations in light of wider academic reading and study in Christian formation and discipleship	32 participants

#### **Four Stages of Data Gathering**

Data gathering took place in four stages. In Stage 1 (February 2014 to November 2016), the purpose was to gather data from UofN DTS participants on how they understood the practices and narratives in the DTS affect them and may lead to learning and change. A Focus Group of 14 attempted to find shared language for interview questions. Twelve Type 1 interviews focused on trainees' experiences of interacting with refugees and those who were considered 'other'. Three Type 2 staff and leaders were included, and seven Type 3 international leaders consulted to gain a broader overview of the aims and intentions of the DTS and what these leaders saw as important in a DTS. Some of Stage 1 could be viewed as a dialogical process. Voices 'from the top' regarding how DTS functions in formation interacted with voices 'from the grassroots' as to what trainees were actually experiencing and how they understood it to be impacting them. I expected differences between the two, which would result in a dialectical process, but significant differences did not emerge.

In Stage 2 (August 2016 to October 2017), I reviewed archived UofN Reference Guides, UofN Course Catalogues, Workshop documents and IDTSC curriculum and documents. The purpose was to reflect on the reified historical artefacts produced by the UofN and IDTSC leaders as a basis for understanding what they think they are trying to do and a means to note consistencies or contradictions and gaps with DTS participants' understandings of what is actually taking place.

Stage 3 (October 2016 to November 2017), was initiated in response to Bronfenbrenner's PPCT design approach to allow for simultaneous investigation of processes, individual persons, and their interaction with other persons and mediational tools in their environmental context over time. The intention was to gather longitudinal interview data from three specific time points: 1) the beginning of the DTS (27 interviews, of which 21 were Type 1 and 6 were Type 2); 2) the end of the DTS six months later (24 interviews, of which 19 were Type 1 and 5 were Type 2); and 3) six months after the DTS ended (19 interviews, of which 17 were Type 1 and 2 were Type 2). Of the 70 interviews conducted, 57 were Type 1 trainee (student) interviews, and 13 were Type 2 staff and leader interviews. The hope was that changes in becoming might be revealed through changes in understanding and fluency in the appropriation of mediational means in the CoP. These changes might indicate processes of learning and identity formation with resulting adjustments in moral trajectories. Some post-DTS disillusionment and struggle to maintain perceived positive changes were expected.

Stage 4 (February 2014 to May 2019) involved visiting 13 UofN DTS sites in ten countries, primarily in Europe, but also in East Africa and the Middle East. The purpose was to become familiar with different DTS contexts during the period of research and consider the role of context and community in situating learning especially for Stage 3 data and to discuss findings with candidates and expert educators in the Masters in



Christian Formation and Discipleship (Type 4 expertise) checking for internal and external validity. See Annex Seven: Stages of Data Collection Timeline.

### **Analysing the Data: Connecting and Negotiating Meaning**

Qualitative data analysis can be viewed as interwoven processes: 1) condensing data, 2) displaying data, 3) drawing conclusions, and 4) verifying them (Miles et al. 2013:13).

These four processes were concurrent and iterative, occurring both during and after data gathering. See Figure 3.2. I employed a data analysis framework asking three questions:

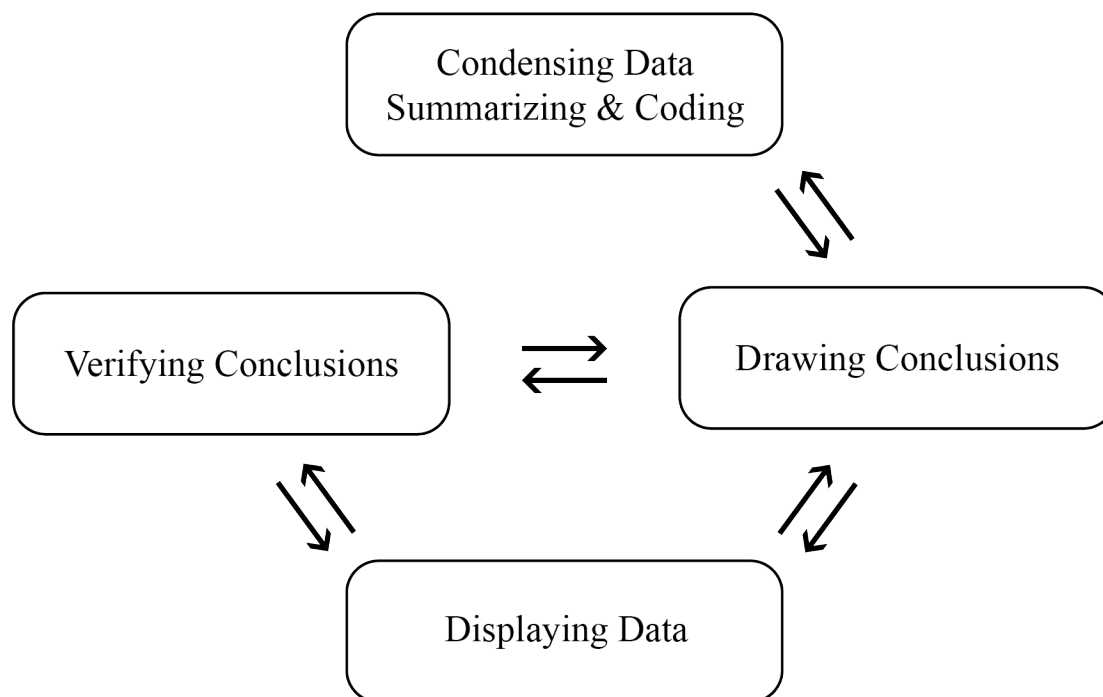
Q1: What are the data telling me? (Explicitly engaging with theoretical, subjective, ontological, epistemological, and field understandings)

Q2: What is it I want to know? (According to research objectives, questions, and theoretical points of interest)

Q3: What is the dialectical relationship between what the data are telling me and what I want to know? (Refining the focus and linking back to research questions) (Srivastava & Hopwood 2009:78)

This process led to refining the research questions and narrowing the focus and methods of analysis.

**Figure 3.2 Analysing the Data**



### **Condensing Data: Narrative Summaries**

A total of 84 semi-structured interviews were conducted and digitally recorded totalling 2,868 minutes (47.8 hours) involving 49 participants. I completely transcribed and checked 83 interviews. Also, I recorded and transcribed 277 minutes (4.6 hours) of DTS activities and 29 minutes of DTS testimonies. I completed narrative summaries of 72 interviews as one way to condense the data. The summarizing process enabled careful and repeated reflection on the content and patterns of interview narratives and changes over time. These narrative summaries helped display the overall picture and patterns and also assisted in selecting the case studies. Finally, the summaries indicated participant changes in the fluency of use of tools and signs and identity trajectories. See Annex Eight: Sample Interview.

### **Condensing Data: Coding**

In *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*, Saldaña describes a code as usually ‘a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data’ (2016:4). Coding is an iterative process, and the codes generated when clustered in patterns can ‘facilitate the development of categories’ and lead to the ‘analysis of their connections’ (Saldaña 2016:9). Researchers warn that coding should not be relied on as the only method of data analysis (Cohen et al. 2011:545), and some researchers prefer to review whole texts repeatedly. Coding has been described as both a craft and an art (Saldaña 2016:42), and I learnt the craft by coding and coding the full transcripts of 70 interviews and four testimonies.

Each interview was coded by Case so that the narrative of the interviewee could be searched and coded independently from researcher questions and responses as the interviewer. Early in the first Open Coding cycle, I began using In Vivo Coding (short phrases of the participants’ own language). This coding method is attuned to each interviewee’s unique perspectives and expressions and more action-orientated than

Descriptive Coding, but it produced too many codes. ‘Code proliferation’ is a common problem. After selectively combining codes, I moved to Process Coding, using gerunds (‘-ing’) words to code participant actions and interactions. For samples, see Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3 Coding Samples ‘Becoming Self-Aware’**

Reference Examples	Process Coding
<p>‘I have been <u>learning</u> these past two weeks a <u>lot about myself</u> being in a very foreign environment. And you get to <u>learn a lot about yourself</u> and your culture and <u>the flaws and the qualities that you have</u>. ... I have been having a hard time with Americans about that. Because I will often say, “Oh they are fake, they are faking it.” <u>But I am judging</u>.’</p> <p>‘before you go and pick on a flaw that is in someone else’s eye, you should probably look at your own brokenness. So, I think a lot of kind of bettering yourself and becoming a good person involves <u>a lot of self-reflection</u>. Like just <u>being really very self-aware</u>.’</p> <p>‘<u>realizing like your vices is really important</u> in working on them, obviously. And I even think that having somebody else there to kind of help you to kind of, “<u>Hey you’re doing it again</u>. Let’s work on it.” They are kind of keeping you in character.’</p> <p>‘before DTS, I had no idea I was <u>judging people</u>. It was fine with me. But now I see that it’s <u>wrong</u> and I really need to work on that.’</p> <p>‘One big thing that has kind of resurfaced a few times since the start of DTS is <u>the way that I view relationships with God, with other people, and then women, our relationship ... it was really distorting the way I would see</u> other people choosing to love me. And when I was having that conversation with the guy I, <u>I just realized that that is how I was seeing things</u>.’</p> <p>‘During that talk, <u>I really found out that there was still quite a bit of pride in me</u>.’</p> <p>‘That doesn’t mean that I am, <u>now that I have recognized that</u>, that I’ve changed it, but it is just continuing every day to try and make better choices.’</p> <p>‘<u>Living in community helped me show a mirror of myself</u>.’</p> <p>‘I realized I had <u>this</u> weird fear of failure ... And <u>I since then have seen</u>. <u>I started to recognize that more</u>, and so when those times come, <u>I actually am more aware of that</u>.’</p> <p>‘<u>Realizing that often what I see as me failing God is actually not in some respects</u>.’</p> <p>‘<u>A revelation that I had on DTS that I still live out of is I used to for some reason thought, basically think that I was stupid and that my only role was just to be the funny person</u>. To be the one, to be that, as Irish people say, good craic. <u>I felt that is how I fit into this world ... actually, God has put some gifts in me</u> that he has spoken to me about on DTS, like being wise, having wisdom and having a powerful voice.’</p>	Becoming Self-Aware

Later I engaged in Descriptive Coding again, particularly as virtues and vices were repeatedly mentioned or became visible in the narrative. I agree with Mason (2002) that pre-existing theories always affect our analysis of data, whether acknowledged or not. I sought to move back and forth in a dialectical process between ‘theory, data generation, and data analysis’ in a strategy that Blaikie terms ‘abductive research’ (Mason 2002:180). I did not use Grounded Theory but approached the interview data informed by MacIntyrean virtue theory, sociocultural activity theories such as mediated action and LPP and CoP learning theory, and practical theology with respect to Christian practices and virtues. These theories affected what I observed in the data and how I interpreted and analysed it, and my data gathering and analysis dialectically affected my understanding and analysis of the theories.

This process naturally led into Concept Coding, which represents meaning at a higher and broader level than a single datum or interviewee’s action. This method affected my second cycle coding or Axial Coding, connecting related codes in subcategories. This process enabled the hierarchy and organization of codes, which – as acknowledged – was theory-driven. Finally, I examined responses to repeated questions in subsequent interviews using Longitudinal Coding, exploring change processes over time, as I interviewed nineteen participants three times over a one-year period.

My coding methods, samples of coding, and my complete codebook were all presented and discussed in a seminar with faculty and postgraduate researchers. This enabled feedback on 1) clarity of code definitions, 2) hierarchical coding structure and concepts, and 3) coding reliability or what might be called ‘coder consistency’ (Richards 2015:118). See Annex Two: Codebook, Annex Three: Sunburst Coding Display, Annex Four: Tree Map Coding Display, and Annex Nine: Sample Interview Page With All Nodes Coding.

### Case Study Participants: Purposive Sampling for Narrative Display

Individual case studies were selected to display the analysis of participants’

appropriation of mediational tools in episodes and display their understanding of how the DTS was affecting them. The basis for these selections is outlined in Table 3.4.

**Table 3.4 Case Study Participant Selection**

<b>Case Study Participant</b>	<b>Basis for Selection</b>
Molly (Major Case)	Molly was selected as a typical case as a 19-year-old North American female from a Christian background. Her narratives express a variety of mediational means also used by others and the ways in which her own identification with people and place in the new CoP disrupt and reconfigure her moral formation. Episodes in her story also indicate zones of proximal moral development.
Clem	Clem was selected as a foil to Molly to thicken the narrative in one episode which was narrated by several participants. Clem is a 25-year-old chef and social worker from the Netherlands. His conflict with leadership and resolution indicate a potential shift from a deontological and utilitarian approach to one which might be considered virtue ethical.
Dave (Major Case)	Dave was selected as an intense case with striking and pronounced changes in his trajectory from an LPP to a fluent member of the CoP. Dave is a 20-year-old Protestant male from Belfast whose grandfather was killed by the IRA.
David	David, a 19-year-old Catholic from Dublin, was selected because of his interaction with Dave in an episode of identificational repentance. Dave inhabits David’s narrative as David draws on narratives in scripture and the teaching of a local Benedictine monk to seek reconciliation.
Simon	Simon was selected as a minor case. A 19-year-old Palestinian male, he enters the CoP fluent and articulate in theology from a strong Christian family. An episode of negotiation of an identity boundary is brokered, and a perspective change emerges. Later Simon is critical and sceptical of ‘hearing God’s voice’ as unhealthy emotionally pressured conformity, but this could be a growth in discernment.

Specific episodes show human action in context. Wherever possible, episodes were chosen as they emerged in multiple narratives or with multiple characters. Another feature of the individual case studies is the narrative expressions of intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions, including those with God. The frequency of these reports was

surprising and evidenced a strategy for moral change and a reported emerging knowledge of God in relation to self and others. In some instances, there was a decentring of self in this process, and the community was emphasized as a transformational environment.

### **Narrative Construction**

Just as there has been a practice turn in social research, there has been a turn to narrativity that is broad and multidisciplinary. Bruner indicates the importance of a narrative approach in construing reality and cultural transmission in education since gaining knowledge is ‘always “situated,” dependent upon materials, task and how the learner understood things’ (1996:132).<sup>2</sup> While the scientific method may mediate our experience of the natural world, our experience of human affairs requires a narrative form. Modernity tended to prioritise ‘rational, logico-deductive reasoning’ (Wertsch 1990:111) as more reliable as it produced and privileged the ‘voice of decontextualized rationality’ (Wertsch 1990:120). However, the appropriation of narrative as a cultural tool proves essential to represent and interpret human actions and the motives behind them. As indicated in Chapter Two, narrative construction becomes an essential method for moral inquiry.

Narrative inquirers share a commitment to the study of experience. In addition, three commonplaces include ‘attention to temporality, sociality, and place’ (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007:69). In this thesis, the present narrative traces backwards towards what has been brought from the past and forwards towards meaning drawn from a future orientation. In this sense, Wenger’s (1998) concept of imagination is used to connect and make meaning of the present from the past in a sociocultural historical sense and ontogenetic sense, but also from the possible futures within a given tradition and the

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<sup>2</sup> The situatedness of experience is a characteristic of several disciplines and is rooted in the phenomenological philosophy of Martin Heidegger and ‘dasein’. The situated learning of Lave and Wenger (1991) is also influenced by sociologists, such as Giddens, as social practice is often pre-reflexive.

teleological trajectory of the narrative of a human life in the process of becoming. This allows moral meaning to be situated within the microgenetic analysis of human action in the episode. In this thesis, institutions, people (individuals and communities), practices, artefacts, and a tradition are all under study within a temporal transition. Put simply, they all have a past, a present, and a future and connecting those makes sense of the data. As explained in Chapter Two, attention to this temporality is necessary for moral inquiry.

In this thesis, sociality involves people and their interactions with one another *and* their narrated interactions with God. Sociality also encompasses the broader sociocultural forces that form individual contexts. In narrative inquiry, there is always a relationship between the researcher and the participants. As noted in this chapter, the inquirer cannot ‘subtract themselves from relationship’ (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007:69). Not only does the sociality of the inquirer and participant interact, but also the sociality of the thesis writer and thesis readers. These interactions and imagined interactions direct and constrain the narrative text as it is constructed.

The third commonplace is ‘place’, that is the ‘the specific concrete, physical, and topological boundaries of place where the inquiry and events take place’ (Clandinin & Rosiek 2007:70). Place often plays a significant role both in imagining the past and in imagining the future:

As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed, and the movements of this process—inward toward facets of the self, outward toward aspects of the external world, alternately both together—cannot be known in advance. When places are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the mind may lead is anybody's guess (Basso 1996:55).

Dynamic narrative theory recognizes that ‘narrating is a process of use – to do things in the world in relation to diverse other people and the physical and symbolic environment’ (Daiute 2014:19). Narrating is an activity in which tools are appropriated to mediate human action. It can also be a tool through which identity is developed or

formed. That might be through conscious construction of a narrative identity, but more often, much of one's 'identity story' is less consciously directed (Polkinghorne 1996:365). Narrative thinking enables persons to 'create a version of the world' to envision 'a place for themselves – a personal world' (Bruner 1996:39). Physical landscape and the landscape of the mind become intertwined and mutually transforming. Here then are three commonplaces – temporality, sociality and place – interwoven consciously and unconsciously as narrative is constructed and moral inquiry is made.

### **Quotations from Transcripts**

Repeatedly listening to the many hours of recorded interview material, making transcriptions, and correcting those transcriptions requires decisions about how to express spoken speech in writing. When speaking in everyday conversation, we use language very differently from its written form. In the transcripts, I sought to keep the exact word order, note longer pauses, and usually included repeated filler words and verbal exclamations. However, I was not approaching the data as a linguistic anthropologist. Retaining the sense and meaning in quotations and adhering closely to the transcripts was very important to me. Nevertheless, verbatim transcriptions can cause participants to appear more hesitant or foolish than they are. I decided to present quotations with accuracy, note significant gaps with an ellipsis, but reduce unnecessary repetitions or filler words and solecisms out of respect for the participants and the readers. Here is an example of my approach:

#### **Original in Transcription:**

And then I went to like a coffee shop and like to speak to my parents. Told them. Bad idea. [Laughter]. I called them, and it was so bad I had a panic attack. I was freaking out and crying, and I was still really scared, and I was still really against it. But I felt like it was like the right thing to do.

#### **Quotation in Writing:**

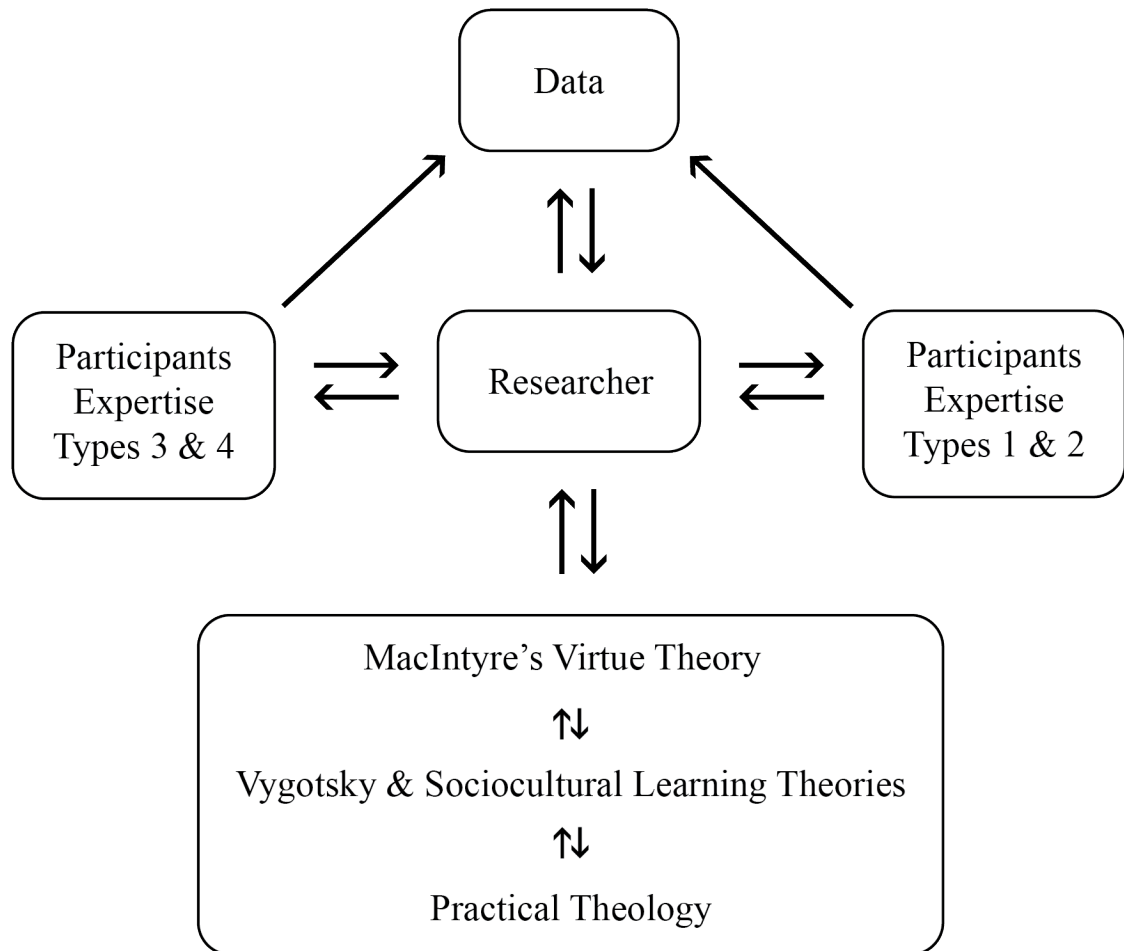
And then ... I called them [my parents], and it was so bad I had a panic attack. I was freaking out and crying, and I was still scared, and I was still really against it. But I felt like it was the right thing to do.



## Verifying Data and Conclusions

Moral inquiry in this thesis avoids the positivist objectivist definition of validity and generalizability. Measuring virtue traits as variables or collections of human behaviours as separate independent elements in reproducible experiments fails to investigate the processes of how people may become good. ‘Narrative discourse has the capacity to unify and integrate disparate elements into a *meaningful* unity’ (Polkinghorne 1996:364, italics added). Access to multiple trustworthy accounts from the participants becomes important. Some of the ways I made good sense of the data included summarizing, coding patterns and themes, clustering, counting occurrences, comparing and contrasting, making connections with theories, triangulating data sources and seeking conceptual coherence (Miles & Huberman 1994:245–46). There are also ways I found to test or verify the findings as a reliable account. In the data-gathering processes and particularly in interviews, I often checked the meanings and understandings of the participants. Sometimes I asked questions several times in different ways, repeated back in my own words what I thought I had heard or understood, and allowed silence to elicit further expressions. I weighted the data gathered towards Type 1 participants, the DTS students themselves and their experiences and understanding, rather than relying on ‘elite informants’. However, I also compared and contrasted the understandings of participants with Type 2 and Type 3 Expertise. I expected greater discrepancy than I found, and possibly this was due to the continued close-to-practice experience. I tried to be aware of researcher biases and have indicated some of these later in this chapter. I specifically pursued informants who might have proven to be outliers or surprise cases. I solicited alternative accounts of the process, person, and context in situations which had multiple informants. I gathered feedback from selected participants on transcripts and understandings. These actions contributed to producing a reliable account. See Figure 3.3.

**Figure 3.3 Drawing and Verifying Conclusions**



Discussing understandings of moral virtue formation with participants of Type 4 expertise is one of the most significant strategies of verification and validity I employed. See Table 3.5. I interviewed international leaders in the UofN DTS, including a Brazilian woman who oversees all DTSs in South America and represents DTS to the wider movement of YWAM, an American woman who led the IDTSC for many years, an Englishman who lives in South Africa and approves DTSs in Africa, an Egyptian woman who oversees DTSs in the Middle East, and an American/French-Swiss man who was international provost of the UofN.

Type 4 reflection occurred during seven intensives in Switzerland and three intensives in South Africa with two cohorts of the UofN Masters in Christian Formation and Discipleship. I discussed Christian formation with Dr Christopher Hall, emeritus professor of spiritual formation at Eastern College and president of Renovaré, as he

taught, worshipped, and ate with us for three weeks in November 2015, February 2016, and June 2018. The Masters staff and candidates signed participant consent forms for my research, so I took notes and recordings. I read online Moodle posts reflecting on tensions in their own Christian formation and marked personal reflection essays and interview assignments. I hosted and interviewed a YWAM DTS graduate and Orthodox monk from Egypt. Fr Seraphim has lived like one of the desert fathers, including more than nine years in seclusion. He taught the Masters on ‘The Early Fathers’ Understanding of Spiritual Formation’.

From 24-30 May 2016, I met with a ‘Gathering in the Holy Spirit’ in Rome of New Charismatic Church leaders and Charismatic Roman Catholics. I discussed with two Franciscan leaders, one of a Polish seminary and one former director of a Franciscan order, their understanding of formation in a Franciscan context. I did the same with an American Catholic systematic theologian at a seminary in St Louis. He had done a DTS and was responsible for the formation of priests.

**Table 3.5 Type 4 Participant Expertise Communities of Practice**

Switzerland	MCFD- Masters in Christian Formation and Discipleship (Switzerland cohort: 24 candidates, 15 staff)	1-13 Nov 2015 11-27 Feb 2016 18-23 May 2016 31 May - 11 Jun 2016 9-24 Feb 2017 14 May - 1 Jun 2017 9-15 Nov 2018
South Africa	MCFD- Masters in Christian Formation and Discipleship (South Africa cohort: 21 candidates, 9 staff)	4-28 Jan 2017 28 Jan - 24 Feb 2018 28 Apr - 6 May 2019
Italy	Gathering in the Holy Spirit (Charismatic Catholics and New Charismatic Church Leaders)	24-30 May 2016
England	UofN International Centre for Christian Formation and Discipleship Gathering with Dr Christopher Hall	26-30 June 2018

The Masters intensives enabled a deeper understanding of the UofN DTS by participating in a CoP. The interactions helped me observe and test approaches to virtuous learning in communities, as I checked my research findings regarding the UofN DTS with the Masters staff and candidates. The point is that multiple conversations gave a contextual understanding of moral formation in the broader Christian tradition and provided a means of testing analysis and theoretical conceptual validity.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This research involved minimal ethical risk and was approved by the OCMS ethics committee. In addition to a previous course in ethics for a postgraduate diploma in Research Methods in Education at the University of Surrey and the five-week Research Induction School in Oxford, I have continued to keep abreast of ethics as a British Educational Research Association (BERA) member and through recent publications such as *Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2018). I committed to conduct honest, accurate, reflexive, and rigorous research, and to seek guidance regarding any possible conflicts of interest that might emerge. I endeavoured to give a clear and transparent account.

I fully informed researchers, participants, and institutions of the purpose and methods of the research and its possible uses and dissemination. See Annex Five: Research Participation Information Sheet and Annex Six: Consent Form. I always obtained informed and voluntary consent from all parties, free from coercion. There were three interviewees (two men and one woman) who at first did not volunteer to be interviewed when the request was made to the group. I invited them individually to participate, reminding them that they could withdraw at any time, and they were willing. In the end, they expressed satisfaction that they had agreed to participate. Most participants expressed a preference to have their real name used. However, I changed the names of all students and some staff to preserve the anonymity of those who

requested it. Although names were changed, participants in a DTS would likely be able to recognize contributors. They lived closely with one another for six months, and many of the narratives relate to shared experiences.

I avoided including more sensitive personal information that was unlikely to be known in the learning community. I also turned off the digital recorder if a participant asked for something not to be recorded. I sought to appreciate and honour the contributions and expertise of all participants (Cohen et al. 2011:88). Some informants worked with refugees and refugee minors, and I avoided using any names or identifying data for those vulnerable persons. Data was stored securely, and institutional GDPR guidelines were followed regarding data privacy and storage as new legal requirements were introduced. Ethical decision-making continues to be a deliberative and iterative process at all stages of the research, not just in the planning proposal, as situations and issues emerge.

### **Reflexivity and Positionality as a Researcher**

Higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian is set against the backdrop of secular higher education for this thesis. However, not all forms of secularism are inimical to spirituality and religion. I do resist a take on modernity that insists on ‘a closed immanent order’ in which religion is excluded or deemed peripheral (Taylor 2007:589–92). As a Mennonite, my particular background makes me gun-shy about equating ‘followers of Jesus’ with a dominant Christian establishment or ‘Christendom’, but neither do I accept hiding away in a sect, ignoring the very real social and political implications of an embodied faith (Yoder 1984). The Anabaptist-Mennonite tradition tends to view faith as ‘embodied in the practices of daily life’, an *orthopraxis*, rather than through a set of orthodox beliefs based on doctrinal positions (Roth 2006:218–19).

Liberalism is not a ‘monolithic, aggressively secular moral tradition’ (Kent 1994:284). Bonnie Kent argues that we should avoid a ‘moral provincialism’ that fails

to recognize virtues in those who are not from my tradition, those who do not share my faith. Our challenge is to seek ‘common ground on which we can meet with mutual respect and good will – recognizing our differences but remembering our shared humanity’ (Kent 1994:285). Occasionally I felt excluded or wary of writing about ‘the ethics of Jesus’ in a ‘secular’ academic world, but those who do not share my religious beliefs also have welcomed me. Whether it was a Marxist professor inspired by Christian community or a Lebanese Shiite Muslim committed to non-violence, our labels poorly define our friends or those perceived as ‘enemies’. I was struck by the way Porpora, a sociologist, weaves the narratives of individuals’ spiritual reflections into a compelling qualitative study depicting a loss of meaning. He remarks on the changing academic climate:

Postmodernism champions the voice of the excluded Other. The academy’s Other has long been religion. Perhaps postmodernism’s invitation was not meant to include religion. Nevertheless, this truly uncanny guest has now tagged along behind deconstructionist literary theory (Porpora 2001:312).

This study is an intellectual, ethical, and spiritual quest, an exploration that involves both the natural and what might be considered the transcendent.

As previously noted, my research position in relation to YWAM/UofN was as an insider. I completed a DTS in 1983 and worked with the Vietnamese in a refugee camp in Thailand under the UNHCR through YWAM Relief and Development Services the next year. I have staffed, led, and taught in DTSS and other UofN courses around the world and lived in two YWAM residential missionary communities from 1985 to 2019. During this same period, I have been financially supported by two Mennonite churches in the USA and two Anglican CofE churches in the UK. Within the Christian tradition, I have participated in reconciliation gatherings between members of New Charismatic Churches and Roman Catholics (Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity 2019) and received extended input from a missionary monk formed in the Coptic Orthodox tradition. More broadly, I worked with Muslims from the Gulf and Tanzanian

government leaders to improve secondary education for the Maasai. I have also benefitted from access to resources at government subsidised universities such as the University of Surrey, Middlesex University, and Oxford University. I am conscious that various sociocultural and historical contexts have gone into forming my 'habitus' or structures of cognition also indicated by Polanyi's 'tacit knowledge'. Having fully engaged in the Christian practices embodied in DTS and the broader Christian tradition, I have been shaped with an insider (emic) perspective and understanding that may enable 'somatic knowledge' or more subtle perceptiveness and insights into new realities (Dykstra 2003:172). While an insider position potentially offers an empathy and sensitivity to nuance in the understandings narrated by DTS participants, I also recognize hindrances and constraints which I will briefly address.

First, as a long-term insider, there is not only power distance in the community of practice, there is potential for that power to be used in ways that affect participants in the study. In YWAM, power comes through networks of relationships, personal charisma, and the ability to communicate a vision. I was sensitive to these subtler means of power and influence. I avoided participant interviews in sites where I taught or had leadership responsibilities. There was still a risk that the narratives would be 'ventriloquated', telling me what I wanted to hear, or put the interviewee in the best possible light considering my position of influence. I also recognized the role of gender and age. I was a married male in my 50s. For some that could mean opening up about areas with a sense of safety and trust, for others less so. I was surprised at the level of transparency, when it came to questions such as, 'If you were to tell me about one or two of your vices, which you are struggling to overcome, what would you tell me about?' Even with anonymity, I avoided using some personal disclosures out of respect for the individuals, a deliberate ethical choice.

On the other hand, I felt some responsibility to guard the reputation of the communities and institution. I considered researching how and why virtue formation fails in DTS communities. This could have proven a very insightful study, but I decided not to take that approach. That was an ethical choice influenced by my position as an insider. With the best intentions of confidentiality, a sense of betrayal could emerge that would damage relationships. International leaders indicated awareness of poorly run DTSs and their deep concerns when that had been damaging to individuals. I focused on how formation works, with a bias towards how it works when it works reasonably well because the research questions were looking at tools and processes which may enable virtues to form. Nevertheless, institutional and DTS community weaknesses can be observed in the narratives, such as ‘exaggerated communication’, a tendency to value emotional worship experiences more highly, and risks associated with young leaders and staff carrying substantial responsibilities.

I recognize that my personal narratives could unintentionally become templates for interpreting the narratives of others. For example, I was sensitized to the power of engaging with people who are ‘other’ through my own DTS, working in the refugee camps, living with Tanzanian families, working with Muslims, and Christian reconciliation. My experience as a 21-year-old American Christian working in a post office with former Communist Vietnamese soldiers, who protected and advised me in a refugee camp in Thailand, shaped my narrative understanding of human dignity and relationships. I am drawn to recognize and present similar narrative templates. There were one or two counternarratives I was tempted to avoid but decided to include.

Another area of reflexivity involved allowing others in the organization to read and comment on the written texts. Although I was not engaging in organizational ethnography, the readings became ‘an active process of sense-making’ and generated further discussions and modifications which could contribute to validity (Neyland



2008:60). As a long-term insider, one constraint is the failure to see the ‘strangeness’ of a situation. This cut two ways. Due to familiarity, some things which made sense to me as an insider would appear very odd to the uninitiated. This could mean that I simply failed to notice them. The other way it cut is that a recognition of strangeness in an activity or episode might mean that I omitted it from my account. This could be due to not wanting to embarrass the person, the learning community, or simply because the episode might require lengthy explanations to make it understandable to the reader.

One strategy I used was to imagine a stranger coming into situations where I was a participant-observer and consider their view of what was occurring. However, holding that distance for long periods tended to push me towards a critical observer stance, from which I was no longer participating. Another strategy was to play the ‘acceptable incompetent’ particularly in interviews when participants were trying to explain an activity (Neyland 2008:99–103). This enabled me to gain more understanding from the participant’s perspective, rather than filling in the gaps with my own. I could not honestly maintain that ‘acceptable incompetent’ stance when engaging in corporate worship or prayer. I did hold back, but also engaged, especially when requested.

It was more difficult to hold back when interviewing international leaders. I found myself passionate about the subject and wanted to discuss and debate. Recognizing this, I aimed to keep it in check during interviews and asked for clarification. Robust discussions and probing regarding Christian formation and practices took place repeatedly and in an iterative process with participants possessing Type 3 and Type 4 expertise and with several academics and critical friends who were outsiders to the YWAM UofN institution.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter presented the methodology, the rationale for the emergent research design, and the types of participant expertise gathered in the data. At the heart of the qualitative

research inquiry is attention to students' learning and identity formation as LPPs in a CoP. The assembled methods are used to investigate participants' understandings and display mind in activity in later chapters. As noted, a multiple case study of individuals was chosen and justified as a research strategy in response to the demands of the research questions. While the narratives of participants were privileged, other sources of data were also gathered and analysed. Instead of methodological individualism, the sociocultural historical tradition enables the consideration of mind in activity in a mutually constituting institutional, social community of practice in a historical context in particular physical settings. Even though cultural and individual processes are mutually constituting and potentially inseparable, this challenge was overcome by accepting analytic separability using different methods and levels of analysis in practice. Data gathering was strengthened by instituting Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model, particularly with the longitudinal design. The data was also condensed in repeated iterations using interview summaries, various types of coding, and the production of conceptual displays. Four types of participant expertise were defined, weighting the evidence from Type 1 to address the research questions regarding the understanding of the students in moral virtue formation. Type 3 and particularly Type 4 expertise were used to verify conclusions drawn in a CoP of Christian formation and discipleship. However, the case studies are not intended to suggest statistical generalization across the DTS population.

As argued in Chapter Two, moral inquiry requires a narrative form, rather than privileging logico-deductive reasoning and decontextualized rationality. Chapter Three described the processes and commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place of the narrative construction and the basis for selecting individual cases. Finally, ethical considerations and the positionality of the researcher were reflexively demonstrated. Chapter Three's methodology is used to investigate how learning communities, such as

the UofN DTS, may assist learners in acquiring and appropriating mediational tools and signs to shape their own behaviour and identity and to shape the world on their journey towards goodness in the Christian tradition. Chapter Four examines the institution of the University of the Nations (UofN) and one of its learning communities in Northern Ireland.

**Chapter Four**  
**University of the Nations Discipleship Training Schools:**  
**A Different Kind of University with New Monastic Learning Communities**

**Introduction**

Having sketched the relevant theoretical and methodological backgrounds, these resources are used to explore the UofN as an institution. The unusual educational practices and narratives of the UofN are located amongst higher education institutions that seek to be distinctively Christian. I will argue that the UofN is a ‘story-formed institution’ with a shared vision narratively expressed. The context of the selected research site in Northern Ireland demonstrates how place and history inform the imagination in connecting and negotiating meaning and identity. Historical and current UofN resistance to the pursuit of some external goods fosters DTSs similar to new monastic learning communities offering practices and narratives which may enable virtue formation. The shared narrative templates embodied in these CoPs have promoted the emergence of an alternative economy. On the other hand, institutionally acquired external goods can sustain excellence in practices. Universities and monastic movements represent two of the longest-lasting institutional forms, but historically neither has proven immune to prioritising external goods. Attempts to reclaim moral education in the virtues require practices sustained by communities with supportive institutions. Failure at any of these three levels would have implications for efforts to demonstrate Christian formation and therefore to articulate theological frameworks for education.

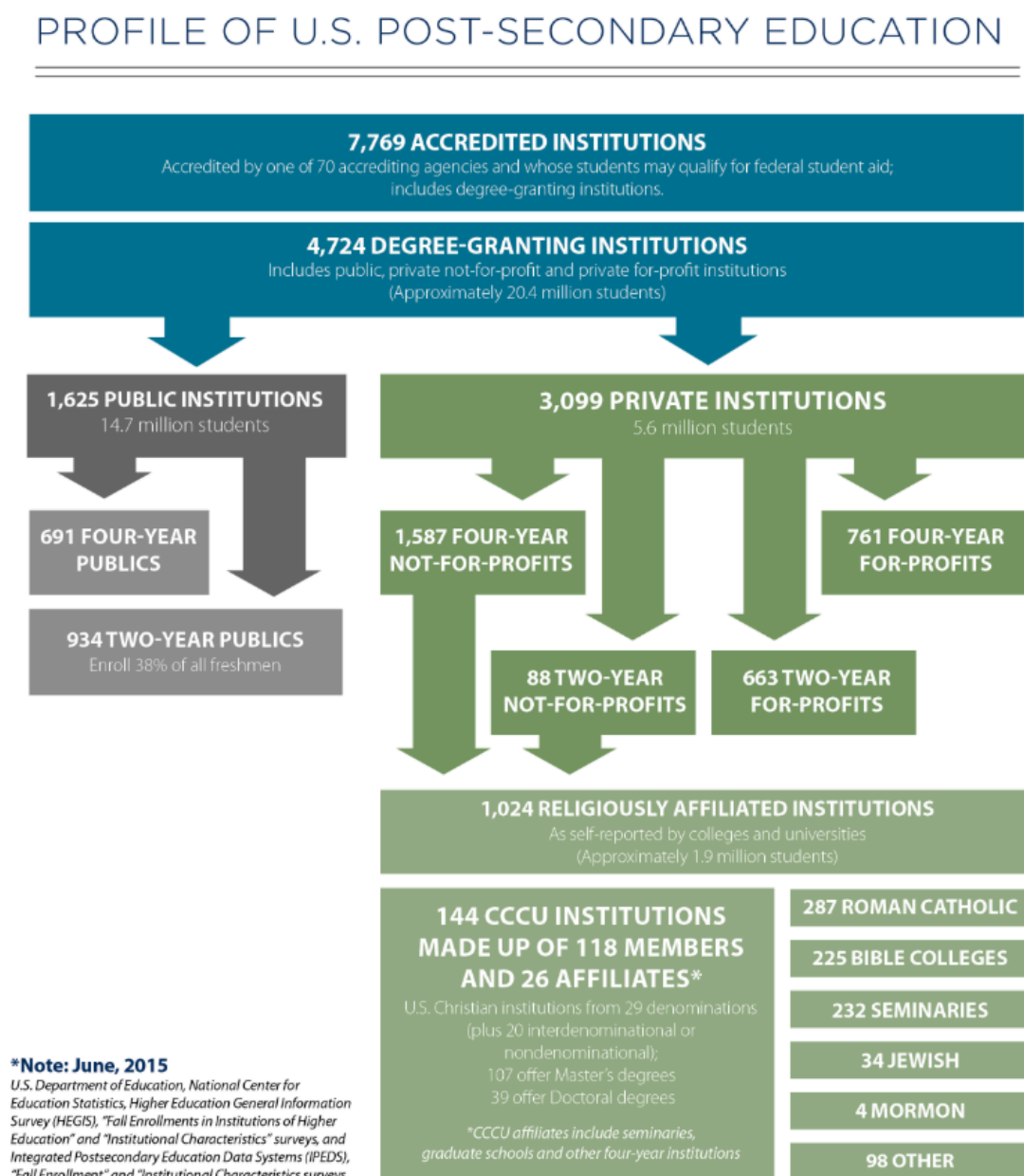
**The Nature of the UofN as an Institution of Christian Higher Education**

Rather than existing in one geographical location, the UofN is a globally dispersed institution comprised of smaller learning communities in multiple locations. UofN academic courses, offered in these multiple learning communities, are organized in seven colleges/faculties and coordinated through a regional and global records system.

The institution is held together by an overlapping participation in the parent movement of Youth With A Mission (YWAM).

As argued in Chapter One, it is unlikely to find a university which aims to promote moral virtue formation through worship, prayer, discipleship, and other Christian practices in England. Smaller higher education institutions – Regents Theological College (2019) offering Elim Pentecostal ministerial training and All Nations Christian College (2019) providing instruction in cross-cultural mission – are two exceptions amongst others. The degree courses in these institutions are usually validated by larger universities, such as the Open University and Durham University. In the USA, however, many more degree-granting higher education institutions committed to Christian formation do exist. The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCC) provides a profile of US post-secondary education that puts this in perspective. The website in June 2019 indicated that more than 466,000 students in the US, increasing to a total of 520,000 globally, are enrolled annually in CCCC member institutions. See Figure 4.1. Member institutions share three educational commitments: 1) integrating biblical truth throughout the institution, 2) fostering Christian formation (moral and spiritual formation) with ‘virtues grounded in the Scriptures and nurtured through the institution’s curricular and co-curricular programs’, and 3) advancing ‘God’s redemptive purposes in the world by graduating students who live and share the Gospel in word and deed’ (Council for Christian Colleges and Universities 2017). These commitments indicate institutions seeking to be distinctively Christian. The UofN is not a member institution but shares these commitments, as shown in this chapter.

**Figure 4.1 Profile of USA Post-secondary Education and CCCU Institutions**



(Council for Christian Colleges and Universities 2016)

### A Degree-Granting, but not Internationally Accredited, Institution

The UofN is a degree-granting institution offering Associate's, Bachelor's, and Master's degrees. It is not internationally accredited, although 'some UofN training locations are approved by government agencies' (UofN Catalogue 2017:23). The UofN Catalogue asserts that its students and courses 'are now recognized by many institutions of higher learning, Christian and non-Christian' (UofN Catalogue 2020:23). The use of the name 'university' without full national accreditation is often proscribed. YWAM

Perth, one of the largest centres, is recognized under the Australian Qualifications Framework as a registered training provider but not as a university. YWAM Perth identifies its affiliation with ‘YWAM’s international network of tertiary level education/training usually known as the University of the Nations’ (YWAM Perth 2018). Other than a few YWAM training centres in Australia, most UofN locations receive no government funding, student loans, or tuition grants, although some are exploring this option. Worldwide, many smaller locations may identify as YWAM and offer courses registered with the UofN.

The growth in UofN locations and student numbers is reported along with the growth of YWAM, the movement, tracing its founding to 1960. See Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1 YWAM/UofN Annual Statistics with Ten Year Intervals**

Year	1968	1978	1988	1998	2008	2018
YWAM Staff	30	1800	6000	12,500	16,000	35,000 <sup>1</sup>
Short Term Workers	1200	22,000	100,000	250,000	N/A <sup>2</sup>	N/A <sup>2</sup>
YWAM/UofN Locations	0	27	123	229	397	484 <sup>3</sup>
Countries Holding UofN Courses	0	19	49	82	114	112
YWAM/UofN DTSs	0	44	286	463	768	747
YWAM/UofN DTS Students	0	715	3871	6302	8537	9483 <sup>4</sup>
YWAM/UofN All Students	0	1210	5886	8976	14,264	17,192
YWAM/UofN Student Nationalities	0	24	87	146	162	177

(UofN Catalogue 2008; 2011; 2014; 2017; 2020; Buening 2009b:28; UofN Reference Guide 2017:62–71; UofN Records System & Nato 2019)

<sup>1</sup> This figure is the best estimate YWAM international leaders report internally. The former international chairman of YWAM indicates that tracking staff and ministry data through questionnaires was requiring significant resources in a decentralized organization (Green 2019).

<sup>2</sup> This data is not available as YWAM no longer tracks the number of short term workers.

<sup>3</sup> Although reporting more than 650 operating locations in around 140 countries, the UofN records system indicates 484 active training locations in 112 countries in 2018.

<sup>4</sup> The figures for DTS students are taken from the international registrar records of those having completed the DTS. Data for 2018 is likely to be incomplete.

From 1974 – 2010, 176,501 students completed the DTS (UofN 2013). The vision expressed by the founders is to train as many as 100,000 students annually (UofN 2001). YWAM UofN is reported as comprised of more than 650 training locations in around 140 countries having had students from 214 countries who were taught in 97 languages (UofN Catalogue 2017:1). Courses were taught in 55 different languages to students of 177 nationalities in 112 countries in 2018 (UofN Records System & Nato 2019). These statistics suggest the numerical growth, geographical dispersion, and ethnic and linguistic diversity.

YWAM training was folded into the UofN from about 1989 with requirements established for centralized course registration and student records. Regional registrars and their associated offices coordinate a global records system providing transcripts and evidence of course credits, grades, and degrees awarded. See Table 4.2. If YWAM training occurs, which has not been registered and recorded with the UofN, then it is not credited as part of the UofN institution.

**Table 4.2 UofN Regional Registrar and Transcripts Offices**

<b>Registrar for</b>	<b>Location</b>
Africa and Middle East	Cape Town, South Africa
Africa (French Speaking)	Handcross, United Kingdom
Asia (South Asia; Southeast Asia/Australia; Indochina/Philippines; Central Asia)	Mitchell, Australia
East Asia	Jeju-do, South Korea
Mexico, Central America, Spanish-speaking Caribbean and Northern Cone of South America	Cartagena, Bolívar, Colombia
Europe	Arnhem, Netherlands
North America and English-speaking Caribbean	Buffalo, MN, USA
Pacific Islands	Kailua Kona, HI, USA
Portuguese-speaking nations and Southern Cone of South America	Brasilia, Brazil
UofN Transcripts Office	Ocean City, NJ, USA

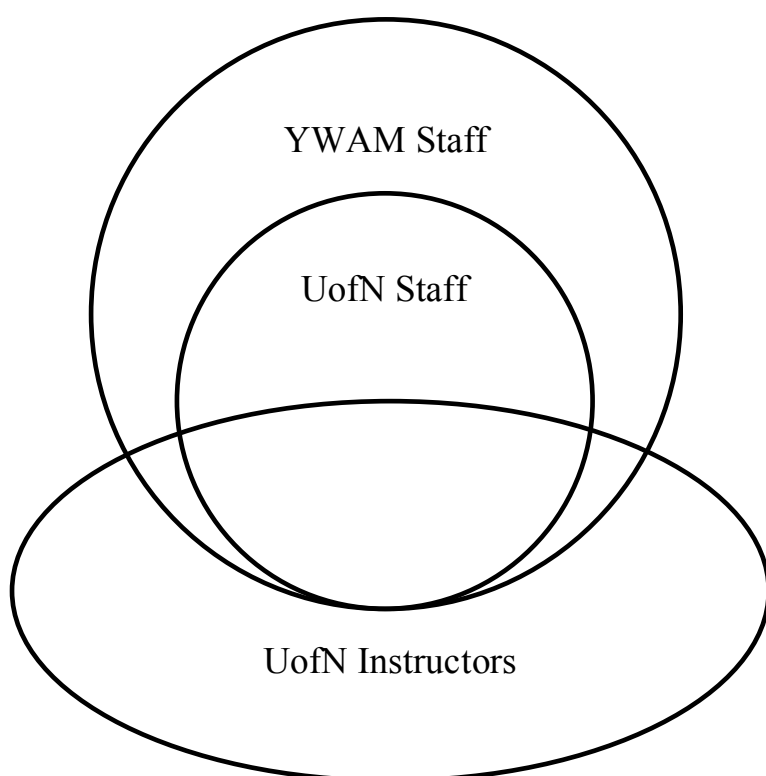
(UofN Catalogue 2020)



### **Modular Course Format as a ‘Multiplier for Missions’**

Courses are modular in format, usually occurring as only one course for an entire twelve-week term, often followed by a field placement. Modules are coordinated by school leaders and their staff who are full-time volunteers with Youth With A Mission (UofN Catalogue 2017:12). UofN staff and leaders are a subset of YWAM staff, although visiting UofN instructors (lecturers/resource teachers) are not necessarily YWAM staff. See Figure 4.2, a Venn diagram, demonstrating the set relationships.

**Figure 4.2 UofN Staff, YWAM Staff, and UofN Instructors**



The modular courses (often called ‘schools’) are:

God-centered ... filled with the excitement of learning who God is, what He has done, and what He can do through us ... integrate scripture truths with academic subjects ... [and] ‘open-ended, so that the creative dynamic of the living God can be continually incorporated into the academic programmes (UofN Catalogue 2017:12).

This description meets the first commitment of CCCU institutions to seek to integrate biblical truth through the institution. Also, the modules are ‘designed to cultivate natural potential, abilities, and spiritual attitudes that help the student respond to God’s call on his or her life’ (UofN Catalogue 2017:12). This and later statements emphasizing godly

character resonates with CCCUs second commitment to foster Christian formation.

Finally, the UofN and each course are intended to be a ‘multiplier for missions’ by furthering the Great Commission evidencing a commitment to graduating students who pursue God’s redemptive purposes (UofN Catalogue 2017:13). All of these commitments indicate an institution seeking to be distinctively Christian.

### **Organization of Modular Courses in Seven Colleges/Faculties**

The modular courses in the UofN are grouped into seven colleges/faculties or are coordinated by an international centre. The names of the seven colleges remained remarkably consistent over the 40-year history from 1979 to 2019. See Table 4.3. A dean and international committee lead each college. An international centre refers to ‘a worldwide network of persons and locations in which well-defined interdisciplinary missions objectives are facilitated, communicated, resourced, researched and organized’ (UofN Catalogue 2017:190). A director and international committee lead each centre.

**Table 4.3 UofN Seven Colleges/Faculties and International Centres**

<b>PACU Colleges/Faculties 1979</b>	<b>UofN Colleges/Faculties 2019</b>	<b>UofN International Centres 2019</b>
Christian Ministries	Arts & Sports	Centre for Core Curriculum
Performing Arts	Christian Ministries	Community Development & Justice Centre
Communications	Communication	Centre for Discipleship Training Schools
Counselling & Paramedic Programs	Counseling & Health Care	Extension Studies Centre
Education & Curriculum Development	Education	Family Resource Centre
Humanities & General Studies	Humanities & International Studies	GENESIS Centre (Global Electronic Network Educating, Serving and Inspiring Students)
Science & Technology	Science & Technology	Student Mobilization Centre
		Centre for Christian Formation and Discipleship
		Centre for Economic Development

(Pacific and Asia Christian University 1979; UofN Catalogue 2017; UofN 2019b)

The desire to better serve the growth of UofN courses is moving the institution to increased regionalization of its structures (Poulsen 2018).

### **The Story-formed Founding of the UofN as an Institution**

Youth With A Mission's University of the Nations (YWAM UofN) traces its history to the founding of Pacific & Asia Christian University (PACU) in Kona, Hawaii in 1978. The co-founders are considered to be Loren Cunningham, also the co-founder of YWAM, and Dr Howard Malmstadt, emeritus professor of Chemistry at the University of Illinois. YWAM UofN is a story-formed institution, with a shared vision narratively expressed. Like YWAM, the movement, UofN stories often involve hearing God's voice and the challenge and adventure of obeying in faith despite a lack of secure finances (Cunningham 1991; Cunningham & Rogers 2010). When published, these stories are written simply and intended for a young audience. Cunningham's books have been translated into more than 100 languages, and he has ministered in every sovereign nation and more than 150 territories and islands (YWAM International 2009). The stories are not only recorded in books. The stories of God's guidance and provision are told and retold orally within the movement contributing to a relational, informal, decentralized structure (Rawlins 2001:49). This oral telling of narrative performs a function as more recent stories are told following patterns of some of the original stories and patterns of certain stories in scripture such as the launch of Paul's missionary journey in Acts 13.

### **Patterned Narratives of Prayer and Hearing God's Voice**

Often the stories begin with a time of prayer and 'hearing God's voice'. Here is an example of the initial story. As a 20-year-old student, Cunningham opened his Bible and asked God to 'speak into' his mind as was his habit.

Suddenly I was looking at a map of the world ... a mental movie ... I could see all the continents, and waves were crashing onto their shores ... the waves became young people ... talking to people on street corners ... preaching the Gospel ... Everywhere they went they were caring for people ... Was that really you, Lord? (Cunningham & Rogers 2010:32-33)

Persevering through testing in obedience to the ‘word of the Lord’ and the vision — that young people could be missionaries — is narrated as reflecting the pattern of God’s ways resulting in the start of YWAM four years later, in 1960. These shared narrative templates (Wertsch 2004; 2008a; 2008b) and the confirmation of shared *experiences* of ‘hearing God’s voice’ and obeying by sacrificially persevering through testing and suffering contribute to community cohesion and institutional coherence. There are resonances with stories of the founding of monastic orders through charismatic leadership and the charisms which emerge over time in monastic communities.

Here is another example. In November 1973, four YWAM staff held an all-night prayer meeting in Kaneohe, Hawaii. Loren Cunningham had the impression of the word *Kona* in his mind, which he knew to be a small fishing village on the big island of Hawaii, and ‘a vision of a lighthouse shining towards Asia’ (Feaver 2007:62). The other staff heard ‘God speak about a farm’, saw a mental picture of ‘a big white ship in a bay’, and received the idea of ‘some kind of school’ that would be ‘much broader in its training’ than the current School of Evangelism (SOE) with its 92 students (Cunningham & Rogers 2010:144). In the morning, without revealing anything to others, the staff asked the students to ‘wait on the Lord’ in prayer and then share their impressions. This was a common practice of intercession in the mission. One student shared they saw a large letter K, another had the word *Kona* but did not know the meaning, while others got mental pictures of ‘some kind of school’, a farm, and a white ship ‘at anchor in the bay of an island’ (Cunningham & Rogers 2010:145).<sup>5</sup> These narratives indicate a belief in God speaking and confirming in prayer, which later led to the founding of the university in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

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<sup>5</sup> Luhrmann demonstrates how the spiritual discipline of kataphatic prayer heightens attention to words and images. The spiritual experiences of those Christians who practice this prayer can be altered in ways in which the Holy Spirit is sensed, dialogue with God is ‘heard’, and mental images and verbal impressions are ‘received’ (Luhrmann 2012:187–88).

The ‘founding of the UofN’ narrative begins as YWAM leaders gathered for a time of prayer and fasting in Hilo, Hawaii in 1975. The phrase ‘modular education’ kept surfacing, although no one knew it as an educational concept. Soon after that, Loren Cunningham was speaking in the Midwest and said that Howard Malmstadt came from the audience, introduced himself, and thanked him for mentioning ‘modular education’ saying the Lord had also revealed this to him (Feaver 2007:60–61). I briefly continue with first names because everyone is on a first-name basis in the institution. This is how UofN stories are told, even though conventional academic writing would use surnames.

Two years later, Loren told Howard that God had said YWAM was to have a university. Loren had struggled with the misunderstandings and expectations the term ‘university’ would create, but he believed that they were being called by the Lord to redeem the word and use it to ‘multiply for missions’. Howard responded that God had already told him that. Howard had been approached to become president of three different universities and after prayer turned them all down because he felt God was saying to go to Hawaii to help YWAM start a university. He left his successful career to become an unpaid volunteer attempting to build a university ‘by faith’ until his death in 2003 (Feaver 2007).

Whether Malmstadt turned down requests to have his name put forward as a university president candidate or turned down three concrete job offers is beside the point. Malmstadt tells of being approached by the chairman of a presidential search committee for an East Coast university (Pacific and Asia Christian University 1979). The point is that stories of giving up wealth, reputation, and security to obey God’s call are frequent within the UofN. In the founders’ telling, these stories indicate a joy-filled relinquishment of rights to pursue God’s call in obedience to God’s voice (Cunningham & Rogers 1988). These stories, combined with a sense of adventure and attempting the impossible, can provide a strong sense of vision and identity which motivate the

thousands of volunteers who serve. However, to be experienced as truthful narratives, these reifications must be confirmed by experience and desires through participation. Unpaid volunteers identify with making sacrifices and leaving things behind to pursue a greater desire, such as answering God's call to missions. As we shall see in later chapters, the narrative tools of joyful relinquishment are also employed in the communities of practice, drawing on narrative templates in the movement, which in turn have been drawn from scripture and ideals in the broader culture, such as adventure and attempting the impossible. These stories, appropriated as cultural tools, have enabled identification with a movement and the establishment of an institution of higher education that relies on leaders and staff who are unpaid volunteers. This has enabled a different institutional economy supported by institutional narratives embodied in shared practices.

### **A Global University for Missions**

In the 1980s, YWAM leaders were exploring founding other regional universities alongside PACU, such as the European Christian University (ECU). During the 1988 YWAM International Staff and Leadership Conference in Manila, Philippines, Cunningham convened 200-300 leaders to seek God for a new name for the university. The leaders waited in prayer and began to share impressions. The name 'University of the Nations' came to Tom Bloomer in this prayer meeting and was adopted by the Board of Regents to replace Pacific and Asia Christian University (PACU). The name was officially accepted as University of the Nations in 1989 at a UofN Workshop in Lausanne, Switzerland the site of YWAM's first training school in 1969, a School of Evangelism (SOE). The new name was understood to reflect a worldwide scope and unity of higher education locations and regionalized university identities were discouraged.

Some in the broader body of YWAM voiced concerns that the university vision would divert attention from the call to world evangelization. The primary theme at the 1989 UofN Workshop was ‘Repentance from Idolatry’ taught and led by Joy Dawson, a respected prophetic Bible teacher in the mission. The application response included hours of ‘seeking God’ and repenting of sin and idolatry individually and corporately. Much time was spent prostrate, literally face down on the floor. One application was from Jeremiah 9:23,24; leaders were warned against boasting about academic achievement, wealth, and positions of authority. The pursuit of ‘Mammon’ was presented as a major form of idolatry governing leadership decisions in YWAM, despite its many faith and finance stories.

Dr Ted Ward, a specialist in international education, was the other plenary speaker, and his talks were full of warnings and descriptions of the dangers for a missionary movement to forsake its heritage in non-formal education to pursue formal education. For example, he indicated that schools tend towards rational academic ends and not towards whole-person development in which the spiritual integrates physical, social, intellectual and moral development. Schools tend to ‘slow the processes of maturing’. Also, ‘students’ purposes tend away from Christian purposes’, and ‘Christians tend to be very traditional educators’ (Ward 1989a; 1989b UofN Workshop, author’s notes). Despite these many warnings – and some leadership irritation about the amount of time spent repenting on the floor – the mission embraced the university vision.

Tensions – especially between those in frontier missions and those involved in the university – would continue for decades (Rawlins 2001:267). Over the years, significant leaders left, sometimes out of frustration. A few expressed these tensions and told their stories publicly. Most of the narratives of frustration – as might be expected – were told privately. YWAM unites around a common purpose ‘to know God and make God

known', and the best means to serve that purpose are debated. In his letter dated 20 October 1989, Loren Cunningham (1989) opened with 'God truly visited us at the UofN Workshop in Lausanne' and closes the first paragraph with 'God is challenging us to evangelize the world and to use the university as a tool in that process'. World evangelization could produce tensions with more traditional purposes of higher education, such as developing intellectual capacities, advancing learning, and seeking truth. That tension could be reduced by theological breadth and depth of understanding of world evangelization as knowing God and making God known. A narrative with God at the centre of a university for missions continues to shape and drive the UofN forward.

### **Centred on Jesus Christ and Born out of YWAM**

The UofN claims to be 'centred on Jesus Christ' and 'dedicated to multiplying missionaries', inviting applicants to adventures in 'making disciples of every nation (Matthew 28:19-20)' (UofN Catalogue 2017:1). These aims have similarities with beginnings of training institutions started by churches and monastic movements to train 'ministers of the Gospel' or missionaries (Burtchae 1998:820). Rather than being connected with one denomination, the UofN seeks to be 'international and interdenominational' both globally and in its local constituencies.

The UofN describes itself as being 'born out of' YWAM, 'a highly decentralized international movement of Christians from many denominations' (YWAM International 2018). Organizationally, the UofN remains very closely connected to the movement at this point in its history. UofN locations<sup>6</sup> are viewed as a subset of the total number of YWAM locations. Previous research on organizational change in YWAM addressed factors such as generational cohorts and cultural diversity affecting leadership transitions (Bishop 2004). YWAM insists that it is a movement, not an international 'organization'. YWAM organizational structures exist at the local and sometimes

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<sup>6</sup> As noted earlier, the UofN records system shows 484 UofN locations in 112 countries active in 2018.



national level, but even at these levels, the emphasis is placed on relating according to New Testament patterns. Attempts to distance the identity of campuses such as UofN Kona from YWAM have been rejected. For example, the 40-year celebration of the UofN was fronted with a video and the repeated phrase ‘once a YWAMer always a YWAMer’ (YWAM Kona 2018). Naming conventions are often joined ‘UofN Kona Youth With A Mission’, or ‘YWAM Kona University of the Nations’. The YWAM UofN Kona campus, where PACU started, is one of the largest in terms of student numbers. Twenty years ago, a thesis using ‘Expectation Enactment Analysis’ researched how the Chancellor of UofN Kona thought about his role and acted to fulfil it (Early 1999). Much has changed in the last two decades. YWAM UofN Kona was sometimes wrongly understood to be ‘the location’ or ‘headquarters’ of the university. However, the UofN views itself as being ‘truly global’ (UofN Catalogue 2017:1).

### **Decentralized Live Learn Communities**

A large number of students, more than 17,000, are spread across 484 active training locations in 2018, mostly in small missional communities or teams. I have visited several of the larger centres which might have several hundred students but also many smaller ones that might have fewer than 30 students in residence at any given time. These centres enable a community life which is much more ‘face to face’. Although YWAM is one of the larger missions movements in terms of personnel, its value of decentralization means that most student and staff learning experiences take place in small communal settings. Secondly, the UofN has not received government funding for students except in Australia. Even there, the majority of the students are not Australian and therefore do not qualify for government subsidy. Thirdly, YWAM’s value ‘to practice a life of dependence upon God for material provision’ means that all ‘YWAMers give themselves, their time and talents to God through the Mission with no expectation of remuneration’ (YWAM International 2019b). Although this is not the

same as a monastic vow of poverty, it does mean that no one in the UofN receives a salary, and few are attracted for financial reasons. This also makes it difficult to maintain large institutional centres as virtually all personnel, including administrators, are unpaid volunteers. Fourthly, the live-learn educational approach is one in which students, staff, and lecturers live, study, and eat in close proximity. This is inspired by Jesus' example with the twelve disciples and the Old Testament 'schools of the prophets'. These factors mean that the university experience of UofN students can be different from that of those attending larger Christian institutions. Even those who had previously attended smaller Bible colleges described their experience in the UofN as involving much more daily interaction with staff, lecturers, and fellow students. Instead of responsibility for spiritual care and discipleship being transferred from the teachers to the administrative staff, and eventually, to specially designated chaplains or pastoral care staff, as has happened in the history of some educational institutions (Burtchaell 1998:820–21), the entire community is expected to take responsibility. The immersive live-learn environment in a smaller community or team is believed to afford opportunities for character development.

### **Focus on Character**

The UofN has made formation in godly character central to their educational approach. This approach is based on 2 Peter 1:5-8 where the Apostle Peter urges his readers to 'make every effort' in adding to their faith, qualities [*aretē*] such as goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, mutual kindness, and love. The qualities are not only to be possessed but to be possessed 'in increasing measure' in order to be effective and productive in their knowledge of Jesus Christ. Although the word 'virtue' is rarely used in YWAM UofN, the UofN catalogue uses the phrase the 'development of godly qualities' (UofN Catalogue 2017:11). The UofN Catalogue 2017-2019 states:

All students enrolling in the UofN are expected to be committed Christians who aim to glorify God in their lives. ... The development of Christian character is an integral part of our training and a central ongoing goal of the UofN. (UofN Catalogue 2017:24)

This emphasis on Christian character emerged for historical reasons. In 1969 YWAM started the first nine-month training courses in Switzerland. These were called Schools of Evangelism (SOE) and focused on the methods of proclaiming the gospel, the message, and the messenger and included foreign language learning. By 1975 more and more young people were entering the mission as new converts from lifestyles of addiction along the hippie trail. There was a recognition that the discipleship of the messenger as a representative and ambassador of the good news was crucial.

This growing recognition of the need for godly character led to the start of the Discipleship Training School (DTS) at Cunningham's request. The first two DTSs began in 1975, one in New Jersey led by Leland Paris and the next in New Zealand led by Barry Austin. The aim was to focus on Christian character development to prepare students for missions. Austin went on to lead the first European DTS in England in 1976 (Taylor 2010:9). From these beginnings, DTSs spread around the world. Thirty years later an empirical study of three DTSs in YWAM England indicated consistency of students' experiences of 'being a disciple' with that of Cunningham's understanding of 'being a disciple' revealed in his books but with several divergences. Taylor summarized Cunningham's understanding as "'being transformed through applying the bible [sic] in the context of world mission', 'being transformed through living in community' and 'experiencing an inner leading from the Holy Spirit'" (2010:2). Divergences in understanding may have resulted from 'exaggerated communication' in 'attempts to replicate a charismatic experience' (Taylor 2010:123). Exuberant youthful staff who engage in exaggerated communication while attempting to teach students to 'hear God's voice' can result in 'self-delusion' and insufficient grounding in reality (Taylor 2010:135).

Eventually, DTS became established as a minimum 22-week prerequisite training for all long term YWAM staff and all UofN students. DTSs are registered for credit with the UofN and students are assessed on a pass/fail basis, with evidence of some growth in Christian discipleship being a criterion for passing. This study focuses on moral virtue formation, so DTS was selected for investigation rather than other UofN courses. The DTS prerequisite indicates the emphasis on character development embedded in the structure as well as the ethos of the institution. Maureen Menard, International Vice President of the UofN for Leadership and Staff Development clarified what is meant by character development. ‘We want the inner person to be formed in such a way that in their life, circumstances, [and] relational context they are becoming more the kind of person that would act the way Jesus would’ (MM2). We will see that DTS participants have a similar understanding.

### **University of the Nations as Worshipping Learning Missional Communities**

YWAM’s communities of worship, prayer, learning and practical work in service to others are essential to the UofN. As noted in Chapter One, these interdenominational communities have emerged from the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement (Hocken 1994; Miller 2013; Cochrane 2015) and could be viewed as a new ‘twenty-first-century monasticism’. They represent expressions of the perennial desire to live an alternative communal life in a religious *gemeinschaft* (Keenan 2002:20). That human drive results in diverse communities, which are often provisional and difficult to categorize. The size and vibrancy of the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement in the Global South are generating many new educational institutions (Ma et al. 2014). Due to roots in this movement and its global dispersion, the UofN is likely to share some ethos with these new institutions. The UofN claims to be a different kind of university, and this difference in form and economy may allow for integrated and embodied aspects of a monastic learning community in the Christian tradition.

Dr Thomas Bloomer worked with the UofN since 1983 and served as international provost from 2001 to 2018. He has lived most of his life in French-speaking Switzerland. Bloomer clarified that the idea of the monasteries as ‘worshipping learning missional communities’ had a greater influence on imagining the UofN than the European notion of university and their predecessors, the cathedral schools, which were usually for the elite (TB). He suggested that the great universities of Europe had little focus on outreach, although some of their students showed a concern for the poor. The University at Halle, which Zinzendorf attended, was an exception to that. The historical stream the UofN would identify with and seek to emulate would be the apostolic monastic communities. People lived closely together, engaged daily in worship ‘built around the Word’, such as the singing of Psalms, worked ‘either for the monastery or their surrounding community’, and were centres of prayer, healing, and learning (TB). Bloomer referenced cities like St Gallen, Switzerland founded by apostolic monks. ‘Outreach to the world flowed out of an intense community life’ (TB). Other than international leaders, few in YWAM would trace the sociocultural history of the UofN to the monastic stream. ‘New monasticism’ is not used in YWAM or UofN international literature. An interview with Jonny Clark, leader of one of the selected research sites, demonstrated an exception worthy of further investigation.

### **YWAM Rostrevor and New Monastic Learning Communities**

During the interview, Clark replied that he had used the term ‘new monastic learning community’ and resonated with it. Although he believed that talk about Celtic Christianity and ‘new monastics’ was overly romanticized and often very superficial, he quickly listed saints ‘Columbanus, Columbkille, obviously Patrick, Aidan, and Brónagh [who] was here behind our building’ (24JC). Through the history of place (Basso 1996), he imagined the present. For eight years Clark led a YWAM team in ‘probably the most notorious part of Belfast, at the epicentre of the Troubles on the Shankill Road [a centre

for Protestant loyalist paramilitary] to the Falls Road [an Irish nationalist Republican area]' (24JC). The team had rented seven or eight houses offering trainees a longer ten-month DTS. They partnered with the International Forgiveness Institute and ran 'Forgiveness in Schools' in both Catholic and Protestant primary and secondary schools, held breakfast clubs, did youth work and partnered with community groups, many of whom were struggling. Clark related their vision as having 'a discipling community in the midst of the brokenness of the city'. They were attempting to be 'incarnational' like Jesus 'in the world but not of it' and not just praying for them. One of their mottos was: 'Holiness means moving towards darkness' (24JC). It was, therefore, with reluctance that Clark moved to Rostrevor in 2010. Earlier he felt that he should fill out two sides of an A4 with his vision and submit it to the trustees of the Christian Renewal Centre – founded in 1974 by Rev Cecil and Myrtle Kerr – as they considered what to do with the large property. The ministry, known for its emphasis on renewal and ecumenical reconciliation, had become less active. The trustees agreed to give the property to YWAM, and Clark and the team moved from Belfast to establish the new community (Diocese of Down & Dromore 2010). After a four-year hiatus, Clark was pleased that YWAM Belfast had restarted with 'an almost identical ethos' of reconciliation and community, again implementing the Forgiveness project in about twenty schools (24JC).

### **A Missional Harbour at An Cuan Serving the Common Good**

Naming the base An Cuan (Gaelic for harbour) had a missional motivation as 'boats aren't built for harbours', but harbours are a place for 'support, and supplies, and then to go out' (24JC). Rostrevor is a village of about 4000 people. In terms of local engagement, YWAM has been running a mums and toddlers group for five years, a monthly Open Mic night with about 30 local people attending, a weekly sewing group, and an artisanal fair six to eight times a year. They also have a Monday night worship

and teaching meeting with visitors from about nine different denominational groups. Some ‘local people who may have zero faith whatsoever’ are some of the biggest supporters of their trips to work with refugees in Lebanon. Instead of creating a common enemy or becoming insular, ‘the best kind of unity [is] when ... you have a common vision to reach out from beyond yourselves’ (24JC). For Clark, learning to relate to people who have an antipathy towards Christian faith is an integral part of discipleship. A UofN understanding of contributing to the common good is to serve as Jesus would in every ‘sphere of influence’ (UofN Reference Guide 2019:141) and to fulfil a calling to practically ‘demonstrate God’s mercy and compassion to those in need’ (UofN Reference Guide 2019:249). Clark voiced concerns if discipleship communities become dualistic and fail to engage with homeless people, unwed mothers, and kids growing up without dads. They ‘should be engaged in all of life and bringing life to every part of the life in the area where they are’ (24JC). For Clark, ‘new monastic’ involves regular prayer, commitment, and a ‘real sense of community’ but also ‘engagement locally with people’ regardless what their faith is, or if they have no faith (24JC). These are some of the vital ways Clark sees to contribute to human flourishing locally.

### **Reimagining an Irish Centre of Learning**

The sense of engaging the whole community and the whole of life inspired Clark. The letters ‘Kil’ which begin the name of many Irish towns is a Gaelic word meaning church; towns grew up around the churches and monasteries. This idea of pioneering a missional community that then brings life to the city in all its diversity appeared central in his conception of mission. Clark closed the interview by reading the story of the vision of St Enda and St Ciarán of a great tree – planted by a stream in Ireland – which protected the island and provided fruit that birds took to the world. Enda told his friend, ‘Ciarán, the great tree is you’. In 544 Ciarán obeyed the call and founded what became

the great monastery of Clonmacnoise, which became Ireland's centre of literature, art, and study. Eventually, thousands of students came to study from Ireland but also from England and France (24JC). These stories and others sparked Clark's imagination as he fluently used narrative tools and made connections across space and time. Imagination is a 'mode of belonging that always involves the social world to expand the scope of reality and identity' enabling us to 'see our own practices as continuing histories that reach far into the past' and to envision alternative possibilities for the future (Wenger 1998:178). Similar to St Enda's declaration over his friend as a great tree drawing from Psalm 1:3, Jeremiah 17:8, and Ezekiel 31:4, UofN communities employ metaphorical images often drawn from scripture to convey identity and calling.

### **Connecting with Religious Orders and Ancient Monasticism**

I interviewed Sr Anna Mary – an Irish Missionary Franciscan Sister of the Immaculate Conception – who was visiting. Anna Mary had already served more than 50 years in peace-making and reconciliation in Egypt, Australia, and the Deep South of the USA in the 1950s, as well as Northern Ireland. Anna Mary lived at the Christian Renewal Centre and decided to do a DTS in her 70s. She remained at YWAM Rostrevor four more years before being instructed by her order to move to England to take up responsibilities for a group of Franciscan sisters. Clark described her as bringing 'a wonderful richness' as a grandmother figure, and modelling 'a deep sense of servanthood', with a particular love for the poor, and a global focus (24JC). She appeared to love being with young people. Simon, a Palestinian Israeli, described her as amazing and after lunch with her reported: 'She said, "I have learned so much from a nineteen-year-old"' (1SM2), an example of her humility. Anna Mary believed that An Cuan had several elements of monasticism, including the high value placed on hospitality and being self-supporting. She identified herself as an 'active religious', not a 'monastic' as they would do much more meditation and contemplation. She also



mentioned that the students were introduced to the Benedictine monks nearby (AMH). Clem confirmed that they had quite a bit of teaching from the monks (25CB3).

It is not necessary to insist that YWAM An Cuan is a new monastic community in a narrow sense. Most members would not identify as such. Although they might use the term ‘missionary community’, most often they referred to ‘the community’ or ‘the base’ and identified as a YWAMer. Nevertheless, the monastic traces are there in more DTS communities than only Rostrevor. The YWAM DTS community in Germany who had welcomed Muslim refugee teenagers to live with them were nicknamed ‘the monks’ by social services. This urban community had been pioneered out of another YWAM community in Herrnhut, the historical Moravian centre, and were training and sending out hundreds of missionaries. My own YWAM community in England owns a former National Children’s Home. The elderly sisters from the Methodist order, who had cared for the children, would stop in to visit, and sometimes roll up their sleeves to clean out a building. These traces of a monastic way of life plant seeds into the imagination of what an alternative life of worship and service might be like, though adapted afresh for a new generation.

### **Resonances with New Monasticism**

At ‘New Monasticism: A UK Gathering of New Forms of Missional and Religious Life’ in London in 2016, I was struck by the eclectic mix of church backgrounds. I spoke with several who felt the church had harmed them or let them down and were looking for something different, a place to belong. Many had not lived in intentional community at all, and certainly few seemed to have done so more than a few years. Their concerns related to identity, structure (including relating to Anglican structures), and mission as a new monastic community. An expressed desire was to belong and identify as ‘new monastics’. I discovered a different but related movement of New Monasticism in North

America. Twelve marks or values said to characterize this New Monastic movement include:

Relocation to the abandoned places of Empire.

Sharing economic resources with fellow community members and the needy among us.

Hospitality to the stranger.

Lament for racial divisions within the church and our communities combined with the active pursuit of a just reconciliation.

Humble submission to Christ's body, the church.

Intentional formation in the way of Christ and the rule of the community along the lines of the old novitiate.

Nurturing common life among members of intentional community.

Support for celibate singles alongside monogamous married couples and their children.

Geographical proximity to community members who share a common rule of life.

Care for the plot of God's earth given to us along with the support of our local economies.

Peacemaking in the midst of violence and conflict resolution within communities along the lines of Matthew 18.

Commitment to a disciplined contemplative life.

May God give us grace by the power of the Holy Spirit to discern rules for living that will help us embody these marks in our local contexts as signs of Christ's kingdom for the sake of God's world (Rutba House 2005:xii–xiii).

Despite significant differences, these twelve marks do resonate within many of the expressed practices of YWAM Northern Ireland. Nevertheless, other consistent marks of YWAM communities, such as an emphasis on hearing God's voice, sung worship, intercessory prayer, and equipping for evangelism and cross-cultural mission (Cochrane 2015:205–8) are less evident in the list of the twelve marks. Markofski (2015) presents a fascinating ethnography of an Urban Monastery and analyses new monasticism in relation to American evangelicalism using Bourdieu's field theory. He outlines the multiple and contradictory views and forces in what has often been viewed as a monolithic evangelicalism of cultural and political conservatives (Markofski 2015:108–11). My purpose is not to categorize YWAM communities as examples of 'New Monasticism' in a narrower sense. The geography and sociocultural history of locations

in 160 nations vary dramatically. DTS participants did not identify as ‘new monastics’. Nevertheless, there are resonances with potentially shared impulses and social imaginaries, albeit in very different contexts.

### **Institutions and the Pursuit of External Goods**

Once we turn from principal moral frameworks to the embodied practices and storied narratives that carry associated attempts at formation, we face the fact that those practices may be shaped by conflicting goods. As noted in Chapter Two, MacIntyre characterizes institutions as ‘necessarily concerned’ with ‘external goods’. External goods are properties of institutions as they are ‘involved in acquiring money and other material goods; they are structured in terms of power and status, and they distribute money, power and status as rewards’ (2007:194). Institutions are necessary for the survival of practices, but the pursuit of external goods can also work against the very practices they are meant to sustain. Practices, discussed in the next chapter, are associated with ‘internal goods’ – goods inherent within the practice and their attendant virtues. See Figure 2.1.

University institutions that prioritise economic efficiency may constrain the variety of practices/activities the learning community can ‘afford’ to engage in, thereby resulting in impoverished opportunities for moral virtue formation. Put crassly, if it consumes human and material resources and does not contribute to the bottom line, a practice is likely to be unsupported or actively eliminated in pursuit of institutional survival. This is not to deny the need for careful stewardship and attention to institutional finances, but to indicate that a different institutional economy might contribute to nurturing different practices.

It is this nexus of theologically informed commitments, formational practices, and implications for institutional form that makes the UofN particularly interesting to research when considering faith and virtue formation in post-secondary education. By

presenting similarities of the UofN and its missionary communities with characteristics of neo-monasticism, I have identified the institutional form as resonant with new monastic learning communities. This connects with a moral inquiry into MacIntyre's call for a 'quite new kind of institution, that of the monastery of prayer, learning and labor' in Chapter One (2007:xvi). This is not to claim that a new monastic learning community form is better, but that it is different from the typical economy of higher education institutions.

Nevertheless, even a cursory knowledge of history indicates that monasteries have not proven permanently immune to 'the love of money' and a life of ease. These institutional forms can also prioritise external goods and can be pressured by a decline in numbers and the desire to avoid institutional failure. Sr Anna Mary said that she had personally overseen the closing of twelve convents in her lifetime, and recounted some of the tensions amongst the sisters while discerning the Lord's will as to whether to sell properties or give them to a growing Christian ministry with shared values. YWAM UofN has been on a trajectory of rapid growth, but its attempts to resist the pursuit of Mammon may prove challenging to maintain as it grows and seeks excellence in education and influence in the nations. Service to the poor and 'the last, the least and the lost' can attract the beneficence of the rich and powerful over time. I predict that changes in practices will be signalled by changes in the narratives interacting with them, resulting in changes in the identity of communities and their members.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter located the University of the Nations amongst institutions of higher education that seek to be distinctively Christian. The UofN was identified as a rapidly growing degree-granting institution organized in seven colleges/faculties with a global records system. Its historical emergence and institutional purpose as a university for missions currently allow for decentralized learning communities connected through

overlapping participation in the parent movement of YWAM. YWAM UofN was presented as a ‘story-formed institution’ with a shared vision narratively expressed. The students and staff share common experiences in the DTS, contributing to a sense of unity through social relationships. The shared narratives employ templates involving prayer, hearing God’s voice, joyful relinquishment of rights, and persevering obedience, along with a sense of adventure in pursuing the impossible with God. Previous research on the DTS has noted the danger of exaggerated communication in seeking to replicate charismatic experiences and self-delusion from an insufficient grounding in reality. A tension exists between the institutional pursuit of external goods – academic reputation, wealth and societal influence – and the internal goods of the practices. This tension may be somewhat diminished due to the UofN’s alternative new monastic economic structure requiring committed unpaid volunteers. However, the goals to influence every nation and every area of society indicate the pursuit of at least one external good as an institutional priority. The commitment to reach the ‘last, the least and the lost’ and those who have been excluded from higher education and missions may presently serve to counteract the pursuit of academic reputation and wealth.

In YWAM Northern Ireland, the intention to serve the marginalized is intertwined with stories of Celtic saints to creatively weave a new narrative of identity and belonging connected with ‘place’ and history but pointing towards a preferred future. The UofN is composed primarily of these smaller missional learning communities. Developing skill in weaving the stories of the institution in authentic ways with scripture, with the local and historical narratives, and the individual’s own narrative may enable the changes in belonging and identity encountered in Chapters Six and Seven. In Chapter Five, a variety of activities in the DTS are revealed and explored as Christian practices using the resources of sociocultural and situated learning theories and practical theology.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Mapping Practices in the Discipleship Training School onto Practices in the Christian Tradition**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter connects DTS activities with Christian practices and six YWAM UofN practices using theoretical maps. These maps are not static abstractions of reality but serve the movement of thought.<sup>1</sup> Like narrative, maps can introduce all three tenses: where we have been, where we are, and where we might be going. They help navigate the space in a contextualized account of learning by guiding the exploration of activities as Christian practices in the DTS. The DTS is viewed from the reified perspective of the institutional course catalogue and the perspective of the UofN leaders using Wenger's social learning theories. Then the DTS activities are mapped onto Christian practices using the practical theological resources of Dykstra, Bass, and Kallenberg and Murphy. A dialectical double perspective from the institutional viewpoint and the participants' viewpoints reveals how clusters of activities are understood and experienced and how they relate to six YWAM UofN practices. Finally, this chapter presents DTS participants' composite understanding of a good learning community, an understanding emerging from their engagement in the DTS.

#### **MacIntyre's Lack of Tools to Explore Shared Activities and Practices**

As noted in Chapter Two, I am indebted to MacIntyre for providing a virtue theory framework for moral inquiry. He insists that virtues such as 'just generosity' require a shared common good in a 'kind of communal association', and that both the modern

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<sup>1</sup> In using the geographical metaphor of maps, I am not arguing to create abstract, simplified diagrams of reality, but that maps can be used as tools to guide exploration. Different maps serve different purposes. A street map is different from a topographical map, a climate map or a political map. Similarly, different theories are required to guide and orientate the investigation of embodied practices and narratives in relation to learning to become virtuous. I am indebted to David Bakhurst for the connection of a Vygotskian approach with a map serving the 'movement of thought' (Bakhurst 2015:2). I am also indebted to the 'tool' of my TomTom Satnav with its map updates and 'community map corrections' for this understanding of how maps can serve in navigating a research journey while being connected and corrected in the lived experience of a social context. For example, I and others can feed back unknown roadblocks, uncharted tracks, accidents, and traffic congestion.

state and the nuclear family are incapable of providing this communal association (MacIntyre 1999:131). Learning – how we gain practical knowledge of our shared common good and individual goods – is acquired, not through the ‘mastery of some set of theoretical formulas ... not primarily and never only by theoretical reflection, but in everyday shared activities’ (MacIntyre 1999:135–136). Virtues are not merely individual psychological traits; virtues are performed both individually and together in expressed practices in historical social contexts. However, we need to connect these shared activities with practices and show how they are related to communal associations. Therefore, MacIntyre’s framework is deepened and extended by employing the tools of sociocultural and situated learning theories and the resources of practical theology for research in shared activities and practices in learning communities in the Christian tradition.

### **Negotiating Meaning Amidst the Embedded Patterns of Situated Action**

Within theories of situated action, there is an assumption ‘that much social action is pre-reflexive and embedded in the specificities of the local rhythms and routines of ongoing activity’ (Daniels 2008:93). Unlike MacIntyre’s definition, practice for Wenger is primarily ‘a process by which we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful’ (1998:51). The negotiation of meaning is a continuously emerging dialectical interplay between situated world and personal meaning, ‘constantly producing new relations with and in the world’ (Wenger 1998:54). Experience and understanding are constantly interacting and mutually constitutive, as meaning is negotiated in a social context (Lave & Wenger 1991:51–52). Learning involves not only acquiring or appropriating skills but also involves transformations in identity. Clancey suggests that we should view knowledge as a ‘capacity to interact, to reflect, to innovate’, and we cannot reduce practice to descriptions of what people do or believe (1995:31). A community’s activities may be patterned, but people are often surprising

in their adaptations of activities and reconceptualise their meanings. In this chapter, the focus is on how the activities of the DTS community may be construed as part of broader institutional practices and indeed connected with multiple practices in the Christian tradition.

### **What is the DTS?**

From the institutional textual perspective of the UofN Catalogue, the DTS is a course, an 11 or 12-week lecture/teaching phase worth 11-12 credits (DSP 211) *and* an 8-12 week practical field assignment worth 8-12 credits (DSP 212). Both parts must be completed satisfactorily to meet the prerequisite requirement for all other courses in the UofN or to serve as YWAM staff. The DTS involves ‘intensive Christian discipleship’ and ‘is designed to encourage students in personal character development, cultivating their relationship with God and identifying their unique gifts and callings’ (UofN Catalogue 2017:200). However, international DTS leaders insist that the DTS must not be viewed as a course or ‘just a programme’. From their perspective, the DTS is a gathering to encounter and obey God in a missional community as people engage in Christian practices empowered and led by the Holy Spirit.

The DTS must be run in a YWAM community that is (1) God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – focused, (2) is functioning according to the One Another Passages of the New Testament, and (3) is outward focused in gospel witness and service (International DTS Centre 2019).

Both the gathered community and the community reaching out in missional witness and practical service are understood to be vital arenas for growth.

Menard suggests the DTS needs to create ‘a spacious environment in which you are honouring different personalities and cultures and preferences’ (MM2). However, she also notes:

When I hear this generation is longing for community, I am not sure they are longing for the kind of community that the Bible actually describes as the body of Christ. Even though I think, if they truly experienced that, they would know this is what they need. But I think they are coming in with a more narcissistic kind of need that is driving them ... To even teach and model what is ‘true community’ takes a lot of intentionality (MM2).



From her understanding as a Type 3 and Type 4 expert, modelling community requires intentionality as many enter with a misunderstanding of genuine Christian community. She suggests that situating the DTS community as part of a broader missional community can be powerful in helping individuals at various maturity levels see how they might contribute to the bigger story of what God is doing. ‘It’s a way of inviting the person into the future – not just the future next year – but I mean the next moment ... calling you forth in ways where you are reflecting more and more Jesus’ (MM1). DTS affords many immediate opportunities to serve and make choices to reflect Jesus.

UofN leaders concur with Smith’s proposal that ‘the Christian university should contribute to the formation of radical disciples of Jesus’ (2009:221). They believe that the DTS is designed to form followers of Jesus, ‘disciples who are rooted in the love of God and who love and responsibly serve Him and others for the sake of the whole world, like Jesus did’ (International DTS Centre 2019). The first and second purposes of the DTS are:

To GATHER and INVITE people to worship, listen to and obey God, releasing them (in the context of the DTS) to serve through evangelism, intercession, acts of compassion and other expressions of God’s heart for the world, possibly even pioneering new ministries.

To INSPIRE and CULTIVATE growth in one’s relationship with God resulting in Christlike character by active participation in a missional community who engage in a variety of Christian Practices, including encountering God through the Word by the ministry of the Holy Spirit (International DTS Centre 2019, emphasis in original).

DTS Workshops for leaders and staff insist that the DTS purposes cannot be achieved by simply following a course curriculum or repeating a set of topics or activities. Instead, formation occurs through ‘experiential relational processes that deepen relationship with God and others, while responsibly serving God’s purposes in the world’ (International DTS Centre 2019).

Carla de Paulo, International DTS Centre leader, stresses that a good community is the foundation for a DTS:

Relationships are the most important part of the DTS ... Students can live in a community where they can follow Jesus and have people that can inspire them and challenge them to grow. So good teachers are important ... but God's guidance in the good community is the most important thing (CP).

De Paulo asserts that a good community relates 'in a way that they learn from the New Testament' and that many students are in search of a purpose for their lives, and begin to recognize brokenness in their lives and families and their need for healing (CP). She suggests that experiences of cross-cultural outreach can change students' trajectories of purpose, and gives examples of this as a result of working amongst the River People in Brazil and serving the poor in a township in South Africa (CP). The DTS, therefore, is viewed as a discipling community within a missionary community, not only as a course.

### **Holding Community Together through Practice**

The DTS in a YWAM community can be seen as a CoP. In 1998, Wenger described how practice holds community together in a three-dimensional relationship of 'mutual engagement', a 'joint enterprise', and a 'shared repertoire' (1998:73). In 2002, a simplified concept of CoP involved three essential elements: 'a *domain* of knowledge, which defines a set of issues; a *community* of people who care about this domain; and the shared *practice* that they are developing' (Wenger et al. 2002:27).<sup>2</sup> For the DTS, the *domain* of knowledge is how Christians relate to God, one another and the world. The *community* includes the trainees, the school staff, the school leaders, and the visiting lecturers all encompassed by the wider missionary community. The shared *practice* could be termed discipleship. While this broad use of discipleship as a 'joint enterprise' or 'shared practice' serves to connect with Wenger's view of a CoP, it does not enable mapping of the smaller activities of the DTS onto Christian practices. A finer-grained analysis of a constellation of multiple activities making up the DTS allows linkages to be seen with long-established Christian practices. As identified in Chapter Two, this problem requires resources in practical theology.

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<sup>2</sup> Over the years, Communities of Practice has moved towards organizational theory, but it has also been used very widely used by medical educators (Pearson et al. 2013:57).

## Dykstra and Bass and Christian Practices

Gathered data revealed multiple DTS activities as identified by participants. These smaller activities are embodied within a given spatiotemporal community, but also can be imagined as part of a much longer history and global cultural variations within the Christian tradition. Dykstra, drawing upon MacIntyre, describes a ‘socially established’ practice as ‘participation in a cooperatively formed pattern of activity that emerges out of a complex tradition of interactions among many people sustained over a long period of time’ (2003:170). As noted in Chapter Two, Dykstra and Bass adapt MacIntyre’s definition of practice to be theologically informed (2002:21) and identify specific Christian practices in relation to God as

things Christian people do together over time to address fundamental needs and conditions of humanity and all creation in the light of and in response to God’s active presence for the life of the world in Jesus Christ (2010a:204).

Dykstra’s shorter list of Christian practices<sup>3</sup> includes ‘interpreting Scripture, worship and prayer, confession and reconciliation, service, witness, social criticism, and the mutual bearing of suffering’ (Dykstra 2003:174). His list brings out interpreting scripture, confession, and reconciliation – very much part of DTS internationally – and social criticism and the mutual bearing of suffering which are typically less so. However, as the DTSs I investigated were all working with refugee populations, issues of social criticism in twenty-first-century politics and the shared experience of human suffering emerged in participants’ understanding.

Brad Kallenberg (2003:22) defines the Christian tradition as ‘a socially expanding movement called “the kingdom of God”’. Its primary practice is ‘community formation’. In agreement with Nancey Murphy<sup>4</sup>, he lists five ‘subpractices that contribute to community formation’ as ‘*witness, worship, works of mercy, discernment,*

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<sup>3</sup> Dykstra’s longer list of fourteen Christian practices (2005:42–43) is included in Table 5.2.

<sup>4</sup> Actually, Nancey Murphy does not name them as subpractices but calls them practices. The list is succinct, but a rubric of five may reduce awareness of certain practices and tend towards abstraction away from a more concrete relational term such as ‘table fellowship’. Prayer as a distinct practice is absent from Kallenberg’s and Murphy’s list.

and *discipleship*' (Kallenberg 2003:22, italics in original). Kallenberg's definition draws attention to a primary practice of 'community formation', and this was evidenced in the understanding of many of the participants (411 references in 78 files), all of the international leaders, and the DTS welcome letter in which community is described as 'a massive part of DTS' (Kingdom DTS Manual 2016-17). The DTS in Northern Ireland was named 'Kingdom DTS', another resonance with Kallenberg's definition.

### **Turning Activities into Practices through Sociocultural Mediation**

Nevertheless, unlike Kallenberg, I further distanced myself from MacIntyre's definition of practice to use terms such as activities and practices interchangeably when interviewing participants. My working definition of practices in the context of DTS was: an activity or cluster of activities, socio-culturally mediated using words and tools, which DTS participants engage together in over time. In YWAM/UofN, the object of these multiple activities is to learn to follow Jesus Christ together 'to know God and make God known' in the world. My definition most closely resembles concepts of 'practice as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding' (Schatzki 2001:11) and the more general sociocultural definition of object orientated activities.

The institutional objective of the DTS is expressed as an intention to pursue God<sup>5</sup> and goodness for humans and God's world. This objective brings the pursuit of the good to the fore. I most often used 'activities you are doing in the DTS that are impacting you' in my interviews. What I was investigating and what was being narrated to me were activities, but activities with a sociocultural history, which they considered impacting in some way. These activities were not MacIntyre sized, but much smaller practices, similar to the Dykstra and Bass' definition, at least when taken as 'clusters of

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<sup>5</sup> The cover of the Kingdom DTS manual includes a drawing of a crowned lion with a symbol of the Trinity at the top of the crown and the scripture verse below: 'You will seek me and find me when you seek me with **all your heart**' (Kingdom DTS Manual 2016-17, emphasis in original).

activities'. Tracing the cultural-historical development of activities using Vygotsky's method proved helpful to move from an analysis of 'activity' towards one of human mediated action embedded in Christian practices.

Participants indicated an understanding that some DTS activities were Christian practices or done in church; others were just beginning to engage in them:

Prayer walking is just walking around the village and praying and stopping where we feel God calling us to pray ... A similar thing that we've done here to ... church back home ... There are quite a few people that hadn't done that before (5CG1).

Engagement sometimes demanded a great deal of emotional energy, as well as individual agency, affecting the direction the activity would take. Mandla, a Zulu from South Africa, expressed this in the practice of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Not only reconciliation as a topic, but to reconcile as people, I remember myself reconciling with Clem. He is Dutch, and I am from South Africa. So there has been that conflict in history, whereby Dutch people came to South Africa and took the land from Blacks. ... For me, it was hard, to be honest. Because ... media always gives you lies about what is happening in your country. They will always share all those pictures that there is still racism. ... So, for me looking at Clem and what is happening in South Africa at the moment, I was a little bit angry. But as the time goes, I have to ask God, 'God, is this me, or is this the enemy?' And God told me, 'No, this is the enemy because there is a change in South Africa compared to what it was before.' So, I need to forgive Clem and also forgive myself, because I am the one who is angry, not Clem (9MN2).

Practices are 'historically accumulated, knowledge-laden, emotionally freighted and given direction by what is valued by those who inhabit them' (Edwards 2010:7). Even when the activity was a game, the reported impact was of being invited in, accepted and included with mistakes and imperfections in the community, contributing to belonging and freedom (15MH1).

### **Mapping DTS Activities onto Christian Practices**

Practical theological resources enable DTS activities, gathered through data coding, to be named as social practices and identified with Christian practices. Through imagination, these resources offer a means to map contemporary activities and narratives in learning communities in relation to ancient and continuing practices in the Christian tradition. Column 4 in Table 5.1 maps the UofN DTS activities, gathered primarily from the participants' accounts, onto the list of Christian practices of Dykstra (2005:42–43) in Column 1. Table 5.1 also offers a comparison with lists by Bass

(2010:5, xv–xvii), and Kallenberg (2003:22) and Murphy (2003:33–38) in the middle columns. Definitions of DTS activities can be found in the Annex Two: Codebook.

**Table 5.1 Table of Christian Practices and DTS Activities**

<b>Craig Dykstra</b>	<b>Dorothy Bass</b>	<b>Brad Kallenberg Nancey Murphy</b>	<b>John Peachey UofN DTS</b>
Worshipping- Giving Thanks Hearing Preaching Receiving Sacraments	Singing our lives	Worship	Worship, Singing, Teaching, Devotions, Sharing Communion
Telling the Christian story	Testimony—telling the Christian story	Witness or evangelism	Evangelism, Outreach, Testimony, Witness
Interpreting scripture and church history	Discernment	Discernment	Bible Engagement: reading, hearing, studying, memorizing, discussing praying, reflecting on and connecting with Scripture, Daily Examen, Engaging with different church streams, Journaling, Listening to God together
Praying together			Prayer: Contemplative, Soaking, Freedom Prayer, Healing Prayer, Intercession, Liturgy, Prayer Walking, Time Alone With God
Confessing, Forgiving and Reconciling	Saying yes and saying no		Confession, Conflict Resolution, Forgiveness, Peacemaking, Reconciliation, Repentance
Tolerating failures and encouragement in our work and vocation			Mutual Encouragement, Living in Community
Service and Witness		Works of Mercy	Practical Service, Work Duties, Foot Washing, Mercy Ministry (See Evangelism, Outreach, Testimony, Witness above)
Giving generously and receiving	Household economics		Giving and Receiving
Suffering with and for each other and neighbours			Praying for each other's needs
Hospitality to one another, strangers and enemies			Hospitality, Playing together, Welcoming Refugees and Strangers, Table Fellowship, Love (Agape) Feasts, Cultural Celebrations and Fun Events
Listening and Talking attentively			Confronting, Encouraging, Honouring, Listening, Speaking Truth in Love, Small Group Discussions, One-on-Ones

<b>Craig Dykstra</b>	<b>Dorothy Bass</b>	<b>Brad Kallenberg Nancey Murphy</b>	<b>John Peachey UofN DTS</b>
Struggling together to understand our living context			
Criticizing and resisting evil powers and patterns			Spiritual Warfare, Social Action, Deliverance, Fasting
Maintaining and creating life-giving social structures and institutions	Shaping communities	Discipleship	Discipleship, Accountability, Application, Giving up Rights and Entitlements, One-on-Ones, Local Gatherings and Events, Small Groups, Submission, Team Formation
	Healing		Praying for Healing
	Dying well		
	Honouring the body		Fitness
	Peacemaking		Reconciliation
	Caring for Creation		Recycling/Gardening, Picking up Rubbish locally
	Breaking Bread (Eating well)		Table Fellowship, Love (Agape) Feasts
	Keeping Sabbath		Attending Church, Rhythms of Rest

Mapping allows categorizing analysis as in Table 5.1. Additionally, mapping allows us to navigate the space in a contextualized account of learning by LPPs, guiding the exploration of these activities as Christian practices in the DTS CoP. Practice theory and Wenger's participationist approach with three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment, as presented in Chapter Two, assist in recognizing a shared repertoire in the DTS CoP. In particular, a collective imagination arises from the shared repertoire and allows the positioning of DTS activities and identities, connecting them in the broader context of the Christian tradition. Participants negotiate meaning and boundaries as they account for learning in DTS activities. By reifying the activities and then mapping them onto Christian practices, we can connect them as potentially transformative pedagogical practices in a learning community.

If Dykstra is correct that engaging in multiple Christian practices positions us to encounter 'God's active presence in the world in Jesus Christ' (1999:63; Dykstra & Bass 2010a:204), and offers 'habitations of the Spirit ... the educating work of God's Spirit among us and within us' (Dykstra 1999:78) then this should enable a CoP where

participants can learn to know God. Indeed, the participants' narratives indicate a very strong God-focus and emergent knowledge of God, of self, of others, and of the world.

Without assistance, DTS participants are unlikely to map DTS activities onto a list of Christian practices offered by these practical theologians. They are unaware of such condensed lists of Christian practices. DTS graduates would, however, have some experience and practical understanding – possibly still at a novice level – of almost every DTS activity in my list. That does not mean that every activity is considered impactful by every person, but that they have engaged repeatedly in multiple diverse activities which correlate with practices. The reified names of these activities are identified by DTS participants and indeed gathered from their narrated accounts and corroborated by Type 2, 3, and 4 experts. Type 4 experts from different streams in the Christian tradition confirmed these as shared Christian practices but with variations and distinct emphases. For example, the frequency of liturgical prayers, fasting, and the public reading or chanting of psalms was emphasized by the Coptic Orthodox expert. The Franciscans emphasized service with the attitude of considering oneself as 'the lesser brother'. One-on-ones were identified as spiritual directors in Catholic formation. Type 4 experts familiar with DTS verified the activities as representing multiple Christian practices.

The practices have a history, often in pre-modern Christian practices, and a present variation in a shared repertoire. Imagination, capability, and legitimacy offer a means to reshape practices for the future. The DTS CoP becomes a potential site of virtue formation in the Christian tradition. Demonstrating the UofN institution and DTS communities and practices in Chapters Four and Five enables the context for microgenetic and ontogenetic analysis of human mediated action in the individual case studies in Chapters Six and Seven. Although the cultural processes in the CoP and



individual persons are mutually constituting (Rogoff 2003:51), separate planes of analysis are used to form a dialectical double perspective on DTS practices.

### **Using Planes of Analysis to Form a Dialectical Double Perspective on Practice**

Sociocultural theorist Marianne Hedegaard presents the concept of ‘institutional practice’ in children’s learning and development and has in mind institutions such as the school and home (2012:10–11). Hedegaard writes: ‘The collective institutional practices are the social conditions for a person’s activities’ (2012:12). She distinguishes between institutional practices and a person’s activities, but does not problematize the distinction between institution and practices as in MacIntyre. What Hedegaard does afford is levels of analysis. See Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2 Planes of Analysis**

<b>Entity</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Dynamic</b>
Society	Tradition	Societal needs/conditions
Institution	Practice	Value motive/objectives
Activity Setting	Situation	Motivation/demands
Person	Activity	Motive/intentions
Human’s biology	Neurophysiological processes	Primary needs/drives

(Hedegaard 2012:19)

The middle planes of analysis of institution/practice and person(s)/activity, although somewhat artificially delineated, can provide a dialectical ‘double perspective’. The institution views how ‘the activity takes place in recurrent activity settings’, while the individual learner views how the activity is experienced emotionally and how the learner acts in the situation (Hedegaard 2012:21). The activity setting/situation sits in-between. I use this dialectical double perspective to present both the institutional viewpoint and the individual participants’ viewpoints to demonstrate how the clusters of DTS activities are situated and experienced and how they make up practices.

The boundaries of Christian practices are not easily defined, and a practice can involve multiple activities. Conversely, an activity often contributes to more than one

Christian practice. Everyday life in the DTS community is not easily categorized. I argued that the UofN, as an institution, allows for a rich variety of practices in what might be called new monastic learning communities. These activities and activity settings are experienced as sites of situated learning. When these clusters of activities are connected and mapped onto Christian practices, the evidence is built for how Christian virtues may be being formed as performed virtues are embedded in the practice, the narratives of the individuals in the community, and the tradition. The investigation is not focused on snapshots of virtue as ‘psychological traits’. It is focused on the situated activities and their connection to practices and how these practices are made meaningful by the institution and its leaders and staff. It also investigates how they are experienced and acted in by individual participants. The participants learn to appropriate mediational tools and signs as they engage in the activities of the DTS. In this way, activities are made meaningful as practices through the narrative tools of both the institutional or staff perspective and the learners’ perspectives.

### **Presenting Six Practices of the YWAM UofN DTS**

Six YWAM UofN ‘core beliefs’ are presented as practices. They include: 1) worship, 2) service, 3) prayer, 4) holiness, 5) witness, and 6) fellowship. Note similarities with MacIntyre’s call for a ‘new kind of institution’ like a ‘monastery of prayer, learning and labor’ (2007:xvi), Higton’s declaration that worship and discipleship are ‘the *most* fitting accompaniments’ to university life (2012a:256, italics in original), ‘the liberating arts of worship, confession, theological reflection, mutual love, and humble service’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:11), and the centrality of worship in forming ‘radical disciples of Jesus’ in Smith’s suggestion of a needed ‘new monasticism for the university’ (2009:221).

### **The Practice of Worship**

From an institutional perspective, YWAM presents worship as one of six ‘core beliefs’. The core belief of worship simply states: ‘We are called to praise and worship God

alone’, followed by ten scripture references (YWAM International 2018). The 2018 version of the YWAM Statement of Purpose & Core Beliefs & Foundational Values is a clarification and update and includes the ‘re-insertion’ of scripture references omitted from the 2015 version. As noted, the first purpose of DTS is to ‘GATHER and INVITE people to worship, listen to and obey God ...’ (International DTS Centre 2019, emphasis in original). In coding, I defined worship as ‘expressions and acts of honour, love and devotion to God’. Many UofN leaders understand worship to involve the whole of life orientated towards honouring God. For example, Bloomer urges the UofN to view work as ‘our service, our worship’ and to ‘widen our view of worship to include all that we do’ with references to the Celtic monks who ‘saw no divisions between work and worship, study and prayer’ (1997:1–2).

Nevertheless, common usage of ‘worship’ amongst DTS participants most often refers to ‘sung worship’, which I defined as ‘singing songs, hymns and spontaneous expressions to God or about God or about the need or desire for God’. Sometimes there were references to ‘creative worship’, which involves forms other than corporate singing. These could be as diverse as painting or writing a letter to God. Sung worship in the DTS context is often daily, lasting 30–60 minutes. It usually involves acoustic and electronic musical instruments, contemporary Christian music, and spontaneous expressions of prayer, scripture readings, and exhortations by those participating. Requests that everyone should ‘feel free’ and contribute are frequently made, which is in keeping with a participative charismatic worship style.

From the participants’ perspectives, worship was often reported as impactful. Kylie, from Dublin, found that teaching followed by worship reminded her ‘why you worship’ and ‘provoked a real worship’. She adjusted to a less structured approach to worship in the YWAM community, where you ‘can pray out during songs or ... start a new song’ (12KD1). In her testimony, Kylie reported, ‘I’ve been trying so hard to hold

back the tears' during the song 'No longer a slave to fear'. 'I was crying yesterday as well' during worship 'singing that God is good, and I really believed in my heart, God is so good!' (12KDT). Others also found worship to be an emotional experience. Clem, a 25-year-old Dutch chef and social worker, testified: 'I think the first time it [worship] started I don't know what happened, but I was laying there. For an hour I cried' (25CBT). Dave, from Belfast, remembered 'storming out of worship' in frustration and another time weeping while he stood on his chair 'with arms stretched wide in front of everybody' (16DC2). Mike, a 32-year-old former addict, described worship with 'the awe of God for not giving up on me ... I have so many friends who have died because of addiction ... he has somehow given me a chance over and over again'. Mike continued that he had 'been a very selfish person' and that worship 'softened his heart', and his heart 'grew for other people'. Mike connected worship with an AW Tozer book, *The Purpose of Man*, and declared the purpose of man is to worship God. Mike desired other people to live in their purpose and walk in their freedom (20MC1). For 37-year-old John, a dental lab technician, the time of worship helped him concentrate on the Holy Spirit asking:

What is God telling me? What is he trying to say? ... If there is anything that I need to repent of, like for Sally, my wife, if there is something that I need to say to her that I am sorry for (22JK1).

Mapping activities in lived daily experience onto specific Christian practices is problematic. Practices overlap and boundaries between practices cannot be sharply defined. Worship is connected with the 'why' in response to teaching for Kylie and also with prayer, hearing God, repentance, and asking forgiveness for John.

Mandla reported in his third interview: 'At the moment I am working with maintenance here. I'm just getting my hands dirty as much as I can, and worshipping God with that as well' (9MN3). After a year in the YWAM community, Mandla expressed the more encompassing view of worship involving his work. Mike testified:

I will say that six months in Northern Ireland with these people really focusing on God and getting a desire, a real desire to worship him just because he is good. Even when we see bad, even when

we do bad, he is good. And that's, I think the most important thing that I have learned, that no matter what I have done, no matter what I am going to do, God is the same and he is good (20MCT).

In his third interview, Mike said that he was 'leading the maintenance team' and 'overseeing worship as well' (20MC3). A few participants mentioned worship in connection with communion or the sacraments. Jane, a Texan, reported: 'We did a lot of communion ... bread and grape juice ... we did it on outreach a bunch too, where we would just sit and have worship and communion ... that, I think, was really good' (27JW2). For most DTS participants, worship is a practice in which they focus on God through music, sometimes in emotional ways. Over time, some expressed the broader integrated institutional perspective of worship involving service.

### **The Practice of Service**

Another institutional core belief is 'Service: We are called to contribute toward God's Kingdom purposes in every sphere of life' (YWAM International 2018). 'Spheres of life' are variously called 'seven societal spheres' (Hamilton 2012:13), or 'seven spheres of influence' (UofN Reference Guide 2017:128), and in the mid-1970s named 'seven mind molders'.<sup>6</sup> In 1975 Dr Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, and Loren Cunningham compared their lists of areas of society all Christians could influence to 'turn nations back to God' (UofN Reference Guide 2017:64, 128). UofN leaders refined and clarified that list and sometimes still debate whether there should be seven, eight, twelve, or many more. The seven are: 1) Family, 2) Government, 3) Economics (Science/Technology and Business), 4) Religion, 5) Education, 6) Media, and 7) Celebration (Arts, Entertainment, and Sports) (Hamilton 2012:13–17). These categories inspired the seven colleges of the UofN.

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<sup>6</sup> The term 'sphere' was probably picked up from 'Sphere Sovereignty', the English translation of Abraham 'Kuyper's Dutch phrase *soevereiniteit in eigen kring*', the theme of Kuyper's address on 20 October 1880 at the inauguration of the Free University in the Netherlands. Kuyper points to the concept of 'Sphere Sovereignty' as the new institution's hallmark (Kuyper n.d.; Mouw 2011).

Cunningham urges that exercising influence in these areas involves ‘giving up our rights for His sake and the gospel’s (Mark 10:42-45)’ and becoming ‘servants in the same way Jesus was’ (UofN Reference Guide 2019:141). These themes are emphasized through biographical storytelling and application of biblical principles in world mission in Cunningham’s second book, *Making Jesus Lord: the dynamic power of laying down your rights* (1988). Taylor argues that Cunningham’s relinquishment of rights is accompanied by taking up responsibilities as ‘God’s agent for change’ and a simple expectation of receiving the ‘rewards of relationship with God’ in return (2010:57). On a testimony evening, Steve, the DTS leader, said, ‘DTS, we joke ... but it is true, is a dying-to-self programme. We learn how to give up our rights, to let our kingdoms be overthrown by Jesus, the true King’ (23SST). YWAM communities emphasize service *and* having the right attitude while serving, with phrases such as ‘being servant-hearted’.

During the lecture phase, students and staff engage in work duties such as cooking, cleaning, house or garden maintenance, and caring for guests. This requires about ten hours per week. These activities were observed as occasions to exercise humble service. For example, ‘We tried to have a servant heart by work duties, and that is an activity where we tried to be the least in the Kingdom’ (1SM2), or ‘helping out around the house’ we tried ‘to be servants to each other’ (10AP2). Kylie viewed this ‘servant-heartedness’ as a theme connected with Jesus in the Bible and saw it ‘all over this building, all over the DTS, and the staff. So many people are just willing to serve’ (12KD1). Steve told students, ‘You are not our slaves’. Work duties are because physical labour is good for humans, confront a ‘stronghold’ of sloth, and are a ‘processing tool. How many revelations have I had chopping wood?’ Steve claimed, ‘God meets us when we are doing menial tasks to process what is happening in lectures’ (23SS1). Steve understood that work duties contribute to the community needs, teach

teamwork together, and allow skills to be learned from others (23SS1). Service was also viewed as important in reaching out through events such as a regular community meal, ‘where the townspeople come in, and we serve them, and we talk to them’ (4EK1). Service was often mentioned in outreach and included activities such as clearing rubbish, visiting the elderly, cleaning a hospital, bringing food to refugees, and caring for children. Service was integrated with other practices – such as prayer or evangelism – and seen as ‘activities that help you practice what living like Jesus would be like ... with that Jesus-like-heart, that servant heart, or if you just kind of go through the motions, that’s up to you’ (10AP2).

A misalignment arose when one outreach team to a refugee camp in France were told on the first day they could not ‘evangelise, pray, or even tell people that we are Christians’ without risking dismissal (20MC2). Misalignments occur when the opportunities for action in practices are misaligned with participants’ motives, often resulting in frustration (Edwards 2010:70). The team seriously considered going elsewhere, but after prayer ‘all heard pretty clearly that we were supposed to stay there and that we were there to serve’ (8DJ3). According to David, clarity came because the team were ‘always discussing what was the purpose and what was God having us there for’ (8DJ3). The misalignment could have resulted in conflict, but team discussions and prayer resulted in a shared clarity of purpose. During the first month of their two months in the camp, the team performed manual labour – cooking, chopping firewood, distributing clothing, and working in the children’s centre. Mike said, ‘We pretty much did keep our mouths shut ... We obviously made relationships with other people, the volunteers, the refugees, and we had fun, but it didn’t look like a YWAM outreach’ (20MC2). David reported that the team would pray together every morning and have a short Bible study and that God often gave him ‘verses to meditate on’ while he was chopping wood (8DJ2). After one month, the camp leaders said, ‘You know, we really

like you guys. We don't see you as some kind of hyper-religious group ... You guys be yourselves' (20MC2). After that, the team 'didn't change that much', because 'God was reassuring us we were tilling the ground' and hopefully planting 'a few seeds'. The team did start telling people they were praying for them and saying things like 'Yeah, you know you're a Muslim. That's cool. I'm a Christian' and 'just letting the light of God shine through' (20MC2). One outcome was more in-depth conversations with Muslims and atheists, curious about why the team were different. Relationships developed, evidenced by some of the team returning to visit the camp in their own time and telephone calls. One refugee remarked, 'There is a certain light that is not here anymore since you guys left' (20MC2). Mike continued, 'We don't take credit for that. We know it is God ... but we know for certain that God broke the ground in a lot of people's hearts. We were happy to be used in that' (20MC2).

Service in the DTS was also embodied in the ancient Christian practice of footwashing as instituted by Jesus with his disciples in John 13. During the final week of DTS, I observed the leaders and staff washing the students' feet, 'one last time'. See Annex Ten: Footwashing as a Christian Practice. Steve prefaced it with

It has been a deep pleasure to be a part of your journey. It has been a deep pleasure to serve you, where we can. We honour you ... in being a listening ear, and being somewhat of a guide where we could, serving you in our actions, hopefully modelling something that is good, and that is a life for you guys ... We're going to come and bring some water and come and wash your feet and pray for you and bless you (Footwashing 2017).

Footwashing is not widely practised in churches but is a mystagogical practice. Only by participating can we begin to understand, and perhaps begin to speak of the ways of God and of the mystery of Jesus' presence among us as we serve in the community (O'Loughlin 2015:63–65). I found that footwashing is practised in many DTSs, but perhaps something is missing if it remains limited to leaders and staff washing the feet of the students as humble servant leaders. There is also a radical equality of mutual service in the community of disciples learnt from Jesus, their Teacher. A 'radical



subversion of entrenched societal hierarchies’ can be contained in the act (Pietersen 2019:36).

In many participant interviews, there was evidence that ‘work duties’ were impactful activities. Participants connected them with mutual service, manual labour, having a servant heart and with Jesus’ example and God’s kingdom purposes. Critical theoretical knowledge regarding the seven spheres of influence rarely featured in their understanding. However, practical service and humility in ‘having a servant heart’ did seem to transfer into missional outreach and sometimes into understanding a vocation. David was unclear as to God’s purpose for him in studying engineering. He questioned whether after graduation God would want him to ‘go back into missions’, ‘get a job and work as an engineer’, or use his ‘engineering skills for humanitarian work’, but he was confident that God had a place and purpose, and he was at peace about that (8DJ3). These multiple vocational trajectories may indicate an outcome of ‘education’ and not just ‘training’. Wenger argues the distinction:

Whereas training aims to create an inbound trajectory targeted at competence in a specific practice, education must strive to open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self. It places students on an outbound trajectory toward a broad field of possible identities’ (1998:263).

David described his perspective as transformed from being at university to ‘achieve a degree and earn money’ to ‘receiving a gift of gratefulness’ that he could study. David now viewed university as a place where he was starting to see more clearly how he could intentionally help and bless others (8DJ3). This indicates a reorientation of his moral purpose in higher education towards service with an ability to envision multiple vocational trajectories.

### **The Practice of Prayer**

Another institutional core belief is ‘Prayer: We are called to engage in intercessory prayer for the people and causes on God’s heart, including standing against evil in every form’ (YWAM International 2018). One type of prayer – intercession – is specified, and this can be traced back to the history of YWAM as a missionary movement. In 1967

Cunningham travelled to New Zealand to teach and ‘talk about the new idea of taking young people on mission outreaches’ where he met Joy Dawson (Cunningham & Rogers 2010:83; UofN Reference Guide 2017:63). There, on Great Barrier Island, he was introduced to discerning God’s voice in specific detail as a group process. This led into the practice of group intercession, undergirded by the importance of holiness – having ‘a clean heart’ through conviction, confession and forgiveness – to ‘hear the Lord more clearly’ (Cunningham & Rogers 2010:91).

Dawson introduced a tool to guide intercessory prayer referred to as ‘Principles for Effective Intercession’. The ten principles involve more types of prayer than intercessory petition. They incorporate 1) praise and thanksgiving for engaging in intercession with Jesus; 2) having a ‘clean heart’ through confession, repentance, and especially forgiveness of others; 3) declaring dependence on the Holy Spirit; 4) resisting the enemy with the Word of God, 5) dying to your own imaginations, 6) praising God with expectant faith that he will act in keeping with his character, 7) waiting on God in silence for his direction, 8) expressing what God has brought to mind, 9) using the Bible for confirmation or direction and after praying, 10) thanking and praising God for what he has done (Dawson 1997). These principles were often combined or shortened and named ‘the steps of intercession’. They continued to shape the process of deciding what or how to pray for individuals and nations. Intercession groups could become fluent in the practice, and different members would pick up leading a principle spontaneously and in order. These prayer times generally lasted 45 minutes to one hour, but on occasion could last for hours.

Intercession is an essential practice for the UofN as an institution designed to offer live-learn communities that integrate ‘worship, intercession, work and study’ (UofN Reference Guide 2019:59). From the institutional perspective, a minimum of three hours of intercession each week is absolutely mandatory for the DTS and every

other UofN course (UofN Reference Guide 2019:111, 214).<sup>7</sup> Darlene Cunningham, YWAM's co-founder, declares intercessory prayer as a 'two-way communication' with God 'who hears and cares and has the power to act'. Humans are designed 'to be co-creators with Him through prayer! He chooses to involve us in releasing His will "on earth as it is in heaven" through praying the things on His heart' (UofN Reference Guide 2017:130).

Intercession from the participants' perspectives is often a new practice and connected to learning 'to hear God's voice' (17SH1). The practice is experienced with many variations across YWAM DTSs, no longer always following Dawson's 'Principles for Effective Intercession'. A variation described to me was that the intercession leader chose the nation of South Africa, presenting background information for prayer. Then students could visit three stations in the room. These included one with maps of South Africa where you could write a Bible verse and pray anything that God was telling you to pray. Another station had the names of political party leaders, education leaders, and national leaders for whom you could intercede. At the third station were names and pictures of South African DTS graduates. Students were told to ask God for something encouraging to write and send (17SH1). From the institutional perspective, this variation in the practice of intercession has potential strengths and weaknesses. Background information and listening to God are combined as a potential integration of rational thought and revelational impressions. Not following the 'Principles for Effective Intercession' pattern might hinder LPPs from learning diverse prayer elements and mastery of YWAM's practice of intercession.

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<sup>7</sup> In the list of 'UofN School Leader's Responsibilities', intercession is most strongly stated and according to UofN leaders, such as Bloomer, most likely to be neglected (UofN Reference Guide 2017:117). Intercession: A minimum of three hours of intercession a week constitutes one of the only absolute requirements that applies to all of our schools. The importance of these three hours to the development of the student, the running of the school, the wellbeing of the base, and the turning of the nations to the Lord Jesus Christ cannot be overstated. We dare not fall into the trap of separating prayer from the word. Study and spiritual life have become far too compartmentalized in present-day Christian education (UofN Reference Guide 2019:96).

Times of prayer proved to be activity settings in which new tools of speech were employed. For example, after the first week Aaron reported that he began using the ‘Lord’s Prayer style’, observing ‘Last week, I think pretty much everyone that prayed started out, “Dear God”. But now this week, I and tons of the other students have been saying, “Father, Our Father, Dear Father”’ (10AP1). Aaron suggested that this ‘big change in language’ was ‘already having a deeper impact on people’ as they ‘began to realize how much closer’ God is than they had previously thought (10AP1). Participants mentioned a variety of prayer practices. Simon’s description of contemplative prayer included liturgical prayer, scripture meditation, silence and stillness while appreciating creation, and waiting for God’s input.

I don’t fully understand it yet, but what I tend to do is I read a liturgy. I’m just quiet and say my prayer mentally, or I repeat a few lines in the Bible like: ‘You are loved. You are valued’. Meditate about how that looks, just being still and watching God’s creation. Learning from that and being still and waiting for his input, just being in relationship with him when you are quiet and still (1SM2).

Simon recognized that he was engaging in practices of prayer, which he did not fully understand yet.

Sometimes, DTS staff were challenged by student examples in prayer. Allan, who was teaching the inductive Bible studies, related that Mandla ‘is a real prayer guy. He is praying all the time and ... having answers to prayers’. Allan felt convicted that his own prayer life was ‘very limited’. Allan said, ‘Maybe my prayers have authority, and I am not using it much’ (14AA2). Corporate intercession times provided evidence of the institutional belief in ‘standing against evil’ for an Irish city experiencing high suicide rates with prayers such as:

Lord, thank you for the youth programmes they have going. I pray against the spirit of depression, Father. Break it off ... Lord, I pray for our brothers and sisters as they seek to fight the spirit of death, that by building community they would demonstrate an alternative to hopelessness, Lord ... I pray for the church’s response to the refugees that come to [Irish city]. That we, your people, would be the first to rush in and welcome with hospitality and just give a sense of home to people who have come a long way looking for a home (Recorded Intercession 2016).

The dialectic of institutional and participant perspectives shows some congruence.

There is also evidence of YWAM’s practice of intercessory prayer being reshaped over

time and the introduction of modern adaptations of ancient practices such as liturgical and contemplative prayer into the UofN DTS. The introduction of new tools – ‘Principles of Intercession’, stations of intercession, or praying ‘Our Father’ instead of ‘God’ – transforms the practice and participants’ actions, as seen in the next chapters.

### **The Practice of Holiness**

Another institutional core belief is ‘Holiness: We are called to lead holy and righteous lives that exemplify the nature and character of God’ (YWAM International 2018). Here holiness is a way of life requiring growth in godliness, but it is more difficult to view it as one practice. Perhaps holiness can be viewed as a cluster of practices. From the institutional perspective, holiness is related to a process of growing in Christian maturity. The institution views discipleship as a way of life and, as Jesus is the holy one and the fullest representation of the nature and character of God in human form, I am suggesting that discipleship is related to pursuing holiness and godliness. Discipleship, according to my definition, is ‘following Jesus putting his teaching into practice and helping others to do the same’. The cluster of DTS activities to pursue discipleship includes accountability, application, one-on-ones, small groups, submitting to God and others, speaking and listening, and confession, forgiveness and reconciliation. One-on-ones are required in every DTS and were most frequently mentioned.

From the institutional perspective, a one-on-one is ‘an intentional relational connection of a staff person to a student to help the student cooperate with God to get the most from the DTS’. The staff facilitate by asking ‘What would you like to talk about in this time?’ They ‘actively listen’, ask ‘follow up questions’, encourage and pray together and pray for the student and build relationship outside the set weekly meeting of 30-60 minutes. The one-on-one may confront the student if appropriate and necessary, but is ‘not **THE** discipler of the student’ or ‘responsible for the growth of the student’ (Menard 2010, emphasis in original). One-on-ones may read portions of a

student's journal and give feedback or ask questions related to what was written. The goal is 'to help the student learn how to take responsibility for their own growth'.

Accountability is part of this process, but the student should first be 'accountable to the Holy Spirit' and preferably ask someone else for accountability to 'learn the life skill' of asking for help (Menard 2010). From the institution's perspective, these guidelines are necessary to avoid the pitfalls of one-on-one discipleship experienced by some in the charismatic movement (Moore 2003).

International DTS leaders (Type 3 experts) see three roles in the process of growing in discipleship. First God's role, particularly the Holy Spirit's role to restore disciples to relationship with the Father, to call disciples into truth, revealing deception and convicting of sin, empowering them to live more like Jesus through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension. The second role is the role of the individual to receive and cooperate with God's initiative of grace and to fellowship with God and the community of God's people. The third role is that of the Christian community who practice the 'one anothers' of the New Testament.

Simon, a Palestinian Israeli, recognized his vice as pride and having 'a mindset of knowing everything' and being 'judgmental'. He admitted that he was annoyed with 'American culture' and Americans 'thinking that they are my friend and brother, even though I only know them two weeks (1SM1). A different 'point of view' was mediated by Steve in a one-on-one time. Steve recalled his meeting and that Simon

is annoyed with these girls that keep asking him how he is doing. ... I hear him out, and we walk out near the water and are sitting there. And he is someone I have learned that I can speak directly with. And basically, I can just give him a mirror of himself, saying, 'This is what you are saying. You are annoyed at these girls because they care about you, and they want to get to know you'. And he goes, 'Yeah, I guess you're right' ... at the end of the conversation, I talk about, 'OK, you are judging them because of their American paradigms'. And I asked him, 'Do you care about them? Or are you just annoyed with them?' And he had to think about it. Because God sees the world through mercy, I believe ... It's [exhale of breath] 'Ah man, I love you. How can I apply mercy to this situation?' And just kind of giving him that idea about God. Because he goes, 'Oh man, I am such a jerk!' And it came from this point of being super angry and frustrated, to being, 'I want to be compassionate.' And what that will later turn into, I hope, is deep compassion for the lost (23SS1).

In this narrative, the institutional viewpoint – represented by Steve’s perspective on the character of God – encounters the individual viewpoint – Simon’s frustration at the American girls who treat him as a friend, even though they have only known him two weeks. Through a one-on-one and the introduction of God’s viewpoint – seeing the world through mercy – a dialectical transformation may be taking place. Simon, who has experienced many different cultures, is responding out of judgment and pride towards the girls, and it results in anger and frustration. He becomes aware that he is ‘such a jerk’, and he desires to be compassionate like God. He desires to use the tool of viewing relationship through God’s perspective of mercy. Steve sees further, hoping that this desire to be compassionate, will later become ‘deep compassion for the lost’. The one-on-one provides a setting for mediated reflection, which Steve calls mirroring, enabling Simon to more accurately see himself, see God’s viewpoint and change his ‘mindset of knowing everything’ and being ‘judgmental’. This process could be described as occurring in a ZPD for Simon. Steve, an MKO, introduces tools for moral development. Holiness and discipleship represent a movement towards living a life that demonstrates the character of God.

However, an alternative explanation is that Simon is negotiating a boundary of identity, and the cultural processes of ‘being Palestinian’ are misaligned with the cultural processes of ‘being American’. The frustration, tension, and ‘being judging’ is a result of negotiating that identity boundary and should not be over-spiritualized. It may be that the ‘friendliness’ and easy trust by the American girls is poorly aligned to the need for depth of friendship and trust built over time in highly pressured Palestinian culture. As unity between different peoples and cultures is a goal in the Christian community, learning humility and accepting cultural difference would be virtuous, but sometimes dominant cultures need to be confronted.

Both one-on-ones and small groups were reported to be impactful and beneficial by participants. However, the quality and experience of these activities can vary significantly between DTSs and even within a given DTS. Yenna, a 21-year-old Swede, recounted challenging questions her one-on-one had asked. Questions like – ‘So why is that important? ... Why would you be afraid of being prideful?’ Yenna was now trying to do the same. Her student one-on-one came after writing a letter of confession and forgiveness to her parents, saying, ‘I am so scared to send this’ and started crying. Yenna walked with her into another room and asked, ‘So where is the fear? What are you afraid of?’ (21YB1). There was ample evidence of one-on-one’s acting as MKO human mediators in a potential ZPD enabling moral learning, but maturity and capability varied.

DTS small groups meet together as four to ten people, one to three times per week. The purpose is to get to know one another, to discuss teaching, understand and apply it, to encourage one another and to pray for one another. Small groups often involve a drink or food and usually last one or two hours. These small groups are settings where confession of sin, forgiveness, and reconciliation take place. Joy’s small group was seven or eight girls. She described times within the small group when ‘we would just go and share everything that we were going through, or struggling with’ (27JW2). Dave described the men’s small group as helping him change because ‘you’re actually able to talk about anything with them’ and he had never had that opportunity to talk in a ‘deep and intimate’ way before (16DC2). If humility and honesty in confession are part of holiness and discipleship, one-on-ones and small groups provide activity settings where these virtues may be developed. Nevertheless, holiness as a practice involving all of life is not easily investigated.



## **The Practice of Witness**

Another institutional core belief is ‘Witness: We are called to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with those who do not know Him’ (YWAM International 2018). This belief describes a corporate practice, which in YWAM’s history began with a broad call to reach every individual in every nation with the gospel through proclamation, but deepened to incorporate the implications of the gospel in transforming every area of life. In coding, I defined witness as ‘proclaiming and/or demonstrating Jesus Christ, his authority and his kingdom to the world’. Three DTS activities (evangelism, outreach and testimony) were clustered together. As a practice, the internal goods of witness are continuously debated in YWAM, including amongst the DTS participants interviewed. Should practices of service, hospitality, and presence amongst the poor be equally valued activities of witness? Tensions have arisen between streams in the movement who place a higher priority on evangelism and frontier missions (establishing self-multiplying church planting movements amongst the unreached), developing training and education to equip Christians to be missional in every area of society, or ministries of mercy to the poor and those in society most in need. Often the goal is summed up as a unified call to go to ‘the last, the least, and the lost’. The ‘three-fold calling to evangelism, training and mercy ministries’ is presented as interconnected and rooted in two passages of scripture, Mark 6:15 and Matthew 28:18-20. The two-fold goal, represented by these two scriptures, is ‘to see every individual redeemed and every nation transformed’ (Hamilton 2012:2–3).

In the first goal, the emphasis is placed on giving every person the opportunity to hear and understand the gospel and the choice to repent and believe, or not. This individual goal is further supported by biblical texts such as God’s patience in ‘not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance’ 2 Peter 3:9 and God as Saviour ‘who wants all people to be saved’ 1 Timothy 2:4. Missional implications,

considered to be implicit in the Mark 16:15 command to ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation’, include basic individual rights laid out by Cunningham and YWAM leaders in 1981 (Hamilton 2012:23). This brief document, referred to as ‘The Christian Magna Carta’, reads:

Everyone on earth has the right to:

- Hear and understand the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- Have a Bible available in their own language.
- Have a Christian fellowship available nearby, to be able to meet for fellowship regularly each week, and to have Biblical teaching and worship with others in the Body of Christ.
- Have a Christian education available for their children.
- Have the basic necessities of life: food, water, clothing, shelter and health care.
- Lead a productive life of fulfillment spiritually, mentally, socially, emotionally, and physically.

We commit ourselves, by God’s grace, to fulfill this covenant and to live for His glory (YWAM International 1981).

This document is used to connect the proclamation of the gospel to every individual with missional implications. The six points are considered an outline for transformational action. In recent years, YWAM has convened Christian leaders around the theme ‘End Bible Poverty’ partnering in translation, distribution, and engagement of the Bible. The second goal of seeing every nation transformed was addressed under the practice of service.

DTS students expressed the first goal in statements such as: ‘I would like to be a confident believer, not to be ashamed of God and Jesus, and talk about him in every opportunity’ (11SO1). Clem described a local man who turned up at An Cuan and ‘gave his life to Jesus yesterday’ (25CB1) when Damien, Steve, and Mike prayed for him. Sally described an encounter sharing the stories of Jesus when visiting a Syrian refugee. The woman requested prayer to be filled with the Holy Spirit and asked Sally to anoint her with oil. The woman cried declaring ‘I know that the Holy Spirit is with me right now, and I know that it is real’ (17SH2). While evangelizing, Matthew met a very ill boy he thought was HIV+ in Burundi, and asked, ‘God where are you with these

people? Why would you leave them like this?’ When Matthew talked with the boy, he found his name was Emmanuel and said ‘I felt like God was telling me, ‘Matthew, do you really think that I’m not with him?’ (7MA2). Michelle told stories of teaching in a school for refugees during outreach, and when she hears ‘Jesus died for all the world’ she thinks of refugees (15MH2). By her third interview, Michelle had moved to teach in a refugee school (15MH2).

The practice of witness in outreach was an activity setting for learning to know God and identify with people in a mutual bearing of suffering. Kylie said:

One of the biggest lessons that I learnt on outreach and I’m still learning even to this day ... Our God is a God that stands in solidarity with suffering. He is not above it, and he is not watching it, and he is not saying that everything is going to be OK. But he is actually a God that endures the same suffering that this world suffers. ... It was hard to see so much poverty, so much despair, so much ... injustice. And I think I have to be honest with God and tell him that I don’t see his goodness in the situation. And I asked him, ‘Can you show me where you are?’ And he led me to the cross. ... And I am so glad that I learnt that lesson, because now as a Christian ... I get to partake in what God does in the world by standing in solidarity with people that suffer and telling them that Jesus knows the same, and he has hope (12KD3).

From the institutional perspective, there are simple theological frameworks and key reified documents such as the Christian Magna Carta (YWAM International 1981) to guide the practice of witness. From the participants’ perspectives, witness is engaged in as an often raw experiential encounter in which faith in God’s presence and goodness is tested. Emerging theological understanding and knowledge was frequent in narratives, but YWAM UofN frameworks for witness were less evident in participants’ understanding. Tensions and misalignments often demanded processes of negotiation between the aims of proclamation and service in witness.

### **The Practice of Fellowship**

A final institutional core belief is ‘Fellowship: We are called to commit to the Church in both its local nurturing expression and its mobile multiplying expression’ (YWAM International 2018). Inherent within this commitment is an ecclesiology of Church as encompassing both local and mobile expressions, rather than church vs parachurch. YWAM views itself as a mobile multiplying expression of the Church, as a sodality, but

not as a substitute for the local or denominational church, a modality.<sup>8</sup> Both structures – modality and sodality – are viewed as mutually supportive and needing to ‘work together harmoniously’ for God’s mission (Winter 1981:189).

YWAM’s value is to ‘be international and interdenominational’, both in global scope and local constituency. Ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and denominational diversity are considered positive factors contributing to the ‘health and growth of the mission’ (YWAM International 2018). The institutional expectation is that YWAMers would be members of diverse local churches attending regularly and that they would partner with local churches and other mission agencies in ministry (UofN Reference Guide 2017:132). Drawing from the *koinonia* described in Acts 2:42, the UofN considers fellowship to be ‘a corporate partnership with God and one another’ and ‘the basic building block of an alternate, counter-culture, model society’ (UofN Reference Guide 2017:126).

This alternate society is one in which members of the UofN community not only study together, but work together, worship and pray together, and frequently eat together. A particular activity inspired by the Sisters of Mary from Darmstadt in the early 1970s is a shared ‘love-feast’, or special community meal. These meals are described as vital in ‘community-building’, horizontally and vertically oriented, being ‘lived in true fellowship and in the presence of the holiness of God’ (UofN Reference Guide 2017:115). Fellowship in the DTS also includes practising the New Testament ‘one anothers’ as noted earlier in this chapter. Fellowship is claimed as a missional means to prophetically influence, but not dominate, the surrounding culture through five processes or structures: 1) a socialization process through education, 2) an economic

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<sup>8</sup> Missiologist Ralph Winter used sodality to refer to structures requiring an adult second decision such as missionary bands and monasteries in contrast to modalities which include all ages such as a local congregation, diocese, or denomination. YWAM has members from Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and nondenominational churches. Some nondenominational evangelicals dispute the validity of ‘parachurch organizations’ and believe that the only or primary structure of mission should be the local church.

structure of generosity and stewardship, 3) a leadership structure of servanthood, 4) a conflict resolution structure of justice, and 5) evangelism in external relationships free from coercion (UofN Reference Guide 2019:138–39).

UofN staff and students often narrated the transformative power of relationships in community, but rarely used the word ‘fellowship’ to describe it. For example:

actually more impacting is living life alongside people ... who love God and want to serve him, and want his kingdom to grow.... on my DTS I remember really looking at ... some of the guys on staff and being like, ‘Whoa! They really love God, more than I have seen someone love God’ and ... they are kind of rubbing that off on you. And you’re just seeing how they are alive (14AA1).

This was referred to as a ‘positive peer pressure’ of people ‘serving God and seeking God together’. Exposure to different cultures, different churches, and a different approach to finances are all credited with ‘opening up their minds to a whole other way of thinking’ (14AA1). ‘Sharing a room with a Zulu from Durban, who has never had a lot of the luxuries that Western people have ... changes people’s worldview’ (14AA1).

Fellowship in DTS can lead to a positional distancing from students’ own culture, family, and church, creating tensions when returning home.

I was doing my DTS, and then ... I realized Northern Ireland is like a little fishbowl ... like the whole Protestant-Catholic thing, not everyone has that in their countries. ... I would hear people talk so happily and positively about life. When I came back home, I realized everyone in their normal conversations just beats everyone down and is very cynical ... it didn’t have to be like that, because I’ve seen it in other parts of the world and especially in a YWAM environment of faith ... the cultural environment I grew up in was really toxic to an environment of faith (14AA1).

The DTS encourages exposure to different churches and urges commitment to a local church, but the home church is often compared to fellowship experienced in the DTS.

This comparison can lead to cynicism and judgment of the local church and sometimes a rapid disengagement, rather than a commitment to love and serve. YWAM leaders have long been aware of this danger, as are local pastors. Briefing participants before returning home has a limited effect. Melanie ‘came back to a good church family’ but reported that she felt her ‘Spirit-filled talk’ and actions were viewed as something for ‘extreme Christians’.

They all knew that I had changed, and they did their best to give me room to show that, but I no longer fit. ... So, the first three months were kind of miserable, because I wasn’t connecting with people like I used to. And I felt very fearful, and like I was the odd duck out (19MR3).

After six months, Melanie met with her pastors and moved to a different church that encourages ‘the gifts of the Spirit’, and has ‘a big heart for missions’ (19MR3).

Christopher Twinn, a local pastor for nineteen years, spends four to six weeks a year speaking on debriefing and re-entry in DTSs. He observes that one hindrance to a ‘successful reorientation to life outside the YWAM training environment’ is a ‘rearward perspective’ to ‘going back home’. He introduces a language change teaching the students to envision a forward movement in ‘going on home’. He urges validating the ‘new reality that exists in the heart and mind of the graduating student’, abolishing the language of ‘going back to the real world’, challenging them to be ‘humble influencers’ as they seek to change the world around them. Practically he has them create ‘a weekly schedule incorporating all the elements of the DTS’, identifying ‘the realities of these activities in Christian life, and the time it takes to implement them into a routine’ (Twinn 2019). Bridge persons, who know both worlds, could serve as human mediators to assist returning DTS students as they negotiate the transfer from the DTS CoP forward towards renewed church fellowship with a teleological narrative. New tools could transform the process of ‘going on home’.

### **DTS Participants’ Understanding of a Good Learning Community**

This chapter argues that DTS activities can be related to Christian practices. Engaging in these practices and imagining across time and space result in new negotiations of meaning and new understanding. In their understanding, participants emphasize the importance of living in a supportive community for that process of learning and change. The second sub-question was: *How do DTS participants understand a good learning community?* This question is answered by producing a composite of frequent responses given by participants in their narratives obtained through coding. These factors emerged from and were connected to their recent experiences in the DTS community. See Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 Participants' Understanding of a Good Learning Community**

a space where everyone desires to learn from each other	4EK; 6BP; 8DJ; 10AP; 12KD; 15MH; 17SH; 19MR; 22JK; 23SS
teachability and humility	1SM; 4EK; 8DJ; 12KD; 23SS; 21YB; 22JK; 27JW
diversity	1SM; 2MS; 6BP 10AP; 14AA; 20MC; 21YB
adaptability to the needs and potential of the individual	2MS; 5CG; 14AA; 18BR, 20MC; 23SS
room to make mistakes	6BP; 16DC 19MR; 22JK; 23SS; 25CB; 27JW
supporting you, building each other up, and calling you higher	2MS; 4EK; 6BP; 13WC; 15MH, 16DC; 18BR; 21YB; 23SS
a community that listens	5CG; 12KD; 16DC; 17SH; 25CB
vulnerability and honesty in a 'safe' space	4EK; 5CG; 6BP; 10AP; 12KD; 16DC; 18BR; 19MR; 21YB; 23SS; 25CB
challenging questions, discussions, disagreements, and debate	1SM; 5CG; 10AP; 15MH; 18BR; 25CB
accountability with grace	4EK; 6BP; 14AA; 18BR; 19MR; 21YB; 22JK; 23SS; 25CB
encouragement to try new things again	5CG; 18BR; 22JK; 23SS; 25CB
people at different levels of learning and leadership	8DJ; 10AP; 15MH; 18BR; 19MR; 21YB; 22JK; 23SS; 25CB
learns from God and seeks to know God	1SM; 9MN; 10AP; 12KD; 13WC; 21YB; 25CB

Participants in the research understood a good learning community as a space where everyone desires to learn from each other, where there is teachability and humility, where there is diversity and adaptability to the needs and potential of the individual, where there is room to make mistakes, but the community is supporting you, building each other up, and calling you higher. It is a community that listens, and there is vulnerability and honesty in a 'safe' space with challenging questions, discussions, disagreements, and debate. There is accountability with grace, and encouragement to try new things again from people at different levels of learning and leadership. Finally, participants understood that a good learning community learns from God and seeks to know God together.

Attending to these qualities and interactional processes may contribute to our ability as educators to cultivate virtuous learning communities. When done

cooperatively and with discernment, there is likely to be greater opportunities for learning and the non-coercive rearrangements of desires, rather than coercive indoctrination or a transmission of rule-keeping behaviour. In the participants' understanding, a virtuous learning community allows space for healthy identity formation through interaction with God and others. It appears wise to allow this space even as intentional Christian practices are engaged with in the learning community. A good learning community offers freedom to choose to align with the CoP, or not.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter mapped the activities in the DTS onto Christian practices. The DTS was viewed as a CoP into which students enter as LPPs. Through Wenger's modes of belonging involving engagement, imagination, and alignment, we saw how participants negotiate meaning as they account for learning in the DTS activities. Some of the diverse DTS activities were presented in the six institutional practices. Tracing the lines of connection between activities, practices, concepts, and narratives was assisted by a double perspective using both the institutional and participant perspective as distinct planes for analysis. Practical theological resources enabled the categorical mapping. Dykstra also indicated the significance of engaging in multiple Christian practices for emergent knowledge of God, self, others, and the world. Evidence that Christian practices can carry epistemological weight began to be presented in the participants' understanding. Further evidence will be presented in the individual case studies in Chapters Six and Seven.

Even as LPPs are being formed as they engage in, imagine, and align with practices in the CoP, practices are constantly being re-formed by participants as they appropriate cultural signs and tools. There is some evidence that DTS practices are not limited to 'training', but result in 'education' opening multiple vocational trajectories. Human mediation provides a critical role in this process of becoming. Offering



theoretical knowledge and narrative templates might serve participants to navigate their journey towards goodness, and the quality of mediation by one-on-ones may be a critical factor. Worship, service, prayer, and other practices in a supportive discipling missional community are understood by participants and the institution as enabling desired changes towards seeing and expressing God's goodness in their own lives, in others, and in the world. This leads to the participants' composite understanding of a good learning community comprising a balance of multiple factors including learning from God and seeking to know God, as we will continue to see in the next chapters.

## **Chapter Six**

### **Appropriating Mediational Means in Pursuit of Virtue: Molly's Case and Others**

#### **Introduction**

The preceding chapters set the stage, so to speak, by explicating the relationships between 'the cultural, institutional, and historical contexts' and human action (Wertsch 1998:24). In the next two chapters, the task of analysing mediated human action is foregrounded. This specifically sociocultural approach is one means by which MacIntyre's framework is deepened for empirical research. Vygotsky suggests a genetic tracing along several developmental lines. I will not trace the phylogenetic line of development, although MacIntyre (1999) addresses the need to root virtues and rationality recognizing human animality, dependence, and vulnerability. More attention is paid to humans as desiring, imagining animals. Cultural historical and ontological development lines of several individual cases are traced. Also, specific episodes afford opportunities for microgenetic analysis.

Through analysis of mediated human action in the enacted narratives of the participants, the intermediate steps of moving towards virtue formation and identity formation are interpreted and explained. Maintaining the narrative order of individuals and analysing their appropriation of mediational means along the way leads to some repetition of the same means. The situatedness of the human action allows for comparisons, reduces the emphasis on universal human moral development processes, and thereby brings the investigation of the relationships between sociocultural historical contexts and the individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means to the fore (Wertsch 1991:18–19). In this chapter, Molly is presented as a major individual case supported by minor cases to offer multiple participant perspectives on key episodes. Molly1 refers to interview data gathered at the start of DTS, Molly2 to data at the end, and Molly3 to data six months after the end of DTS. This maintains a longitudinal aspect to the inquiry

using Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model. This approach does not separate; it joins individual cases with their sociocultural historical setting.

**Molly1: It is really going to wreck you for normal life**

Molly was a nineteen-year-old American woman who grew up in the Presbyterian Church. Her family have been Christians for at least four generations, and she is the oldest of four children. Two of her best friends urged her to do a DTS. They suggested it would be 'an incredible God experience' and 'completely change your life'. Molly was unsure, wanted to 'think about it', 'prayed about it', and 'just kind of went with it' (2MS1). Molly was impacted by the human mediation of two friends and their enthusiastic testimony, possibly an example of 'exaggerated communication' (Taylor 2010). Perhaps the hyperbole of their claims caused some doubt. The narrated order of decision making was to think, pray, and just go with it. After graduating from high school in May 2015, Molly applied in February 2016. Molly said that she did not have expectations of a DTS except 'that it is really going to wreck you for normal life. You're never going to be able to go back to the same everyday life and for it to be satisfying' (2MS1). The friends' testimony was taken as a means to head towards a 'God experience' more satisfying than 'everyday life'. Molly used this tool of an imagined, exciting future to change location. The dislocation and disruption from family and established relationships in 'normal life' signal a journey towards new social relationships in a new place, Northern Ireland. This disruption – common in starting university – affords many opportunities for change in social relations and, as we will see later, in identity. Molly's appropriation of the tool of testimony has both affordances and constraints. It offers a more exciting imagined future priming Molly for change, but it means that other options are closed and unrealistic expectations may not be met. Appropriating hyperbolic testimony could lead to pre- and post-DTS positioning and constrain contentment with 'everyday life'.

As well as seeking to appropriate her friends' testimony and make it her own, Molly named an exemplar when asked whom she would like to become. She referenced Heidi Baker, a charismatic conference speaker and missionary to Mozambique. Molly claimed that she does not know what she wants 'right now', and – unlike Heidi Baker – does not have a 'desperate desire' for God or to fulfil God's desires for the world. Molly does want to 'live with a greater purpose'. In tracing a possible cultural historical line of development, it may be that Molly's Presbyterian background has emphasized a greater sense of God's sovereignty in the 'ordinary' and 'everyday'. The charismatic stream she is entering has a greater emphasis on the 'extraordinary' (Asamoah-Gyadu 2014). It is unlikely that Molly or her friends ever read Joy Dawson's (2001), *Forever Ruined for the Ordinary: The Adventure of Hearing and Obeying God's Voice*. Dawson was an influential YWAM Bible teacher and speaker. The testimonies and the Heidi Baker exemplar carry the title's theme. Some leaders in YWAM UofN would like to address the tendency to overvalue the extraordinary in the charismatic stream by recommending books such as Julie Canlis' (2017) *A Theology of the Ordinary*. These arguments are characteristic of MacIntyre's depiction of a moral tradition. Molly said she did not think that much change happened in her during the previous six months, but that she had a bit of the mindset that after finishing DTS she would be 'super on fire for God'. She thought, 'Well then, I better get any youthful indiscretions out of the way before I leave [Laughter]' (2MS1). Molly imagined herself in the future to address and possibly justify her actions of 'youthful indiscretions'. The anticipated boundary crossing of leaving home and coming to DTS primed her expectation for discontinuity and change in her way of life.

**Molly1: It can completely crack open your worldview, if you let it**

Molly believed that engaging in 'each activity can affect you in a different way, *if you let it*' (2MS1, emphasis added). She recognized a degree of freedom of choice in

appropriating or resisting the tools offered through the activities. To allow each activity to affect you, you need to come in ‘open-minded’, not thinking ‘I don’t believe what they are saying already’. At least you need to be open to ‘see what happens’ and be ‘very accepting’. Molly emphasized that it is the combination of activities on DTS that is important and makes it ‘work’.<sup>1</sup> The metaphor she used is ‘different spices’ making a ‘beautiful dish’. Molly listed: 1) soaking, sitting quietly in worship music and listening or journaling; 2) Time Alone with God; 3) worship together; 4) quiet times of individual prayer; 5) praying together; 6) work duties, where you ‘learn to work together as a team’, process with others or ‘goof around and be a little less serious’; and 7) lectures from ‘intelligent’ experienced people with ‘different life experiences’ (2MS1). These activities represent practices in a community of worship, prayer, labour, and learning. Molly believed this combination of activities

tends to completely crack open your worldview, like just these concepts that you have ... The things that are untrue get ripped away, and the things that are true get confirmed and get hardened. And they get better and stronger (2MS1).

Molly has identified an internalization process as external social participation in activities lead to the transformation or reformation of her intramental processes and concepts as in Vygotsky’s theory (Vygotsky 1994:69; Wertsch 1985:61–67). Engaging in new activities may afford new cultural tools and the appearance of more complex or even new forms of mediation. Although Vygotsky indicates these may represent turning points in development, previous psychological operations do not cease. ‘The explanatory framework must be *reformulated*, not discarded and replaced’ (Wertsch 1985:23). This enables the incorporation of new factors into the explanatory system as they interact with existing factors.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig Dykstra notes the importance of engaging in multiple Christian practices and the combination of practices and their relationships with one another as a much-needed agenda for theological education (1999:63; 2003:178–80).

### **Molly1: God-focused and all about the community**

At the first interview, Molly had only been part of the DTS community for ten days, but she reflected that from 6:30 am until 1:00 pm is very ‘God-focused’ and ‘from 1:00 pm until you go to sleep is all about the community’ (2MS1). She picked up on the DTS intention to ‘cultivate an awareness of the presence of God with us’ and to engage ‘in a very intentional way with him’ in all aspects of life (MM2). As well as ‘God-focus’, Molly identified the DTS emphasis on the role of intentional community in discipleship described in Chapter Five.

The axial coding theme of ‘God Focus’ (85 files and 875 references) is prominent and widely reflected by participants. The most frequent references under ‘God Focus’ after ‘God’ were to ‘Jesus’ or ‘Christ’. A typical comment was: ‘I would like to become more Christ-focused and less focused on obviously myself, and my life to just be totally centred around God’ (6BP1). In the final interviews, Jesus could be connected to Christlike character qualities.

I would say that gentleness needs to come from a place of humility, almost. And if I have Jesus, then I can be gentle. I don’t feel the need to control, or I don’t feel the need to be harsh, or quick, or short-tempered with people (27JW3).

Having Jesus is a means to let go of control or harshness and to express the virtue of gentleness from a position of humility. Changes in understanding Jesus’ purpose and teaching with pre-DTS positioning were also noted:

Before I came here, I very much saw Jesus as he came to say some nice things. And he’s great. He’s our comfort. He’s our ticket to heaven. ... I think, over my time here, I have understood more and more why it is so hard to actually follow Jesus ... You know, it is so radical. But I have also seen how what he says about not taking revenge, not retaliating ... but instead taking the blow and taking the world’s hatred, bitterness, and through what Jesus says, through the cross, redeeming it and transforming it into compassion and love. And I have seen how if people don’t understand that about Jesus, how we as Christians can be dangerous if we think God is on our side, and he is not regarded as a God of peace (12KD3).

In Kylie’s understanding, following Jesus is radical and challenging. There is a redeeming and transforming process of changing the world’s vices of hatred and bitterness into virtues of compassion and love through Jesus’ words and the cross.

Others, such as Mike, did not report the difficulty, but the naturalness of doing God's will.

If he is transforming our heart, if we have the same Spirit in us that Jesus had, I think a lot of things that we do and a lot of things that he wants us to do are, or should be, or can be, just kind of natural expressions of who he is and who we are (20MC3).

After 'Jesus' the next most frequent codes under 'God Focus' were 'Hearing God's Voice' and 'God Guiding'. The focus on God and expressed interactions with God were surprising in their frequency, variety, and intensity of use as a mediational tool.

### **Molly1: That just blew my mind**

Molly found the Scottish teacher presenting the Father Heart of God, to be very impactful. He told stories from his life, read the Bible, used statistics, highlighted things to take down in notes, gave imagery to process, had them work in teams, and connected on the first day by telling them 'weird details about his life' which was 'hysterical'. Molly presented this long list of mediational tools in the teaching/learning process. Molly described the teacher as being 'super involved' leading you to feel 'he was talking to you one-on-one', 'knowledgeable', 'super passionate' and the classroom as being very 'interactive'. He introduced the theoretical concept of 'father filters' meaning that perceptions of and relationships with a parent figure affect how we view and relate to our 'Heavenly Father'. Molly remarked:

The concept that the way you handle relationships in your life can affect the way that you perceive God, that just blew my mind ... that was so beyond my capability of understanding before this and, he just really broke it down (2MS1).

This is an example of human mediation introducing 'theoretical knowledge' in a ZPD. Molly claimed that before the introduction of this new concept, it was beyond her capability to understand it. It may be particularly impactful because Molly described her vice as bad relationships with men, being 'too loyal to the wrong people'.

The 21-year-old DTS leader, Steve, discussed DTS teaching as 'impartation'. He paraphrased a Richard Rohr quote as 'you can only give what you have' and continued:

So, if you want to give freedom, do you have freedom? If you ... want to impart to someone relationship with Jesus, what is your relationship with Jesus like? Because that is all you are going

to communicate. So, the lecture phase is about deepening our freedom, deepening our understanding of God, deepening our relationship with God ... the more they view God, the more they realize that people need to know this God, too (23SS1).

Steve connected a process of deepening freedom, understanding of God, and relationship with God with viewing or beholding God, resulting in a realization that other people also need to know God. Steve understood the teaching/learning process as one of 'life impartation', having little to do with knowledge transfer. Taking notes was described as a 'side effect'. Steve recited one of the verses for the school:

'This is what I ask of the Lord. This is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, and gaze upon his beauty in his temple'. Like go, view God. The first YWAM value is: know God. What does that mean? Let's figure it out. Let's go and know him, which means our paradigms are shifting. The way we view the world is shifting all the time. 'Be transformed by the renewing of your mind'. This is what lecture phase is (23SS1).

In his interviews, Steve fluently used mediational tools. He quoted others, quoted Bible verses and stories, and connected these with concrete relational examples and stories in the DTS community. Steve's understanding of renewing the mind involves a process of seeking God's presence, viewing God, and going to know God resulting in a continuous shifting of paradigms. He presented a pedagogical dialogue with God in prayer:

Every day in the classroom, God is desperately trying to reveal himself to us, I believe. And we have to always be ready to see that. There is a spiritual atmosphere of the Holy Spirit wanting to move. I constantly am praying in the classroom, saying, 'God, what is coming against us? Where are we having a blind spot right now?' OK, Michelle looks tired, 'God, do I address that directly, or do you want me to just pray for her?' (23SS1)

Molly listed Steve as a good example in the community, because 'he loves each and every single one of us and ... he is determined that no one will fall through the cracks and that no one will go unnoticed'. Later in her first interview, she recounted Steve's advice when struggling with someone or something they were doing. He advised 'look back at yourself' and ask, 'Why is this upsetting me? Why is that a problem?' Molly paraphrased, 'Before you point out the stick in someone else's eye, you should probably take the log out of your own'. She interpreted this as looking first 'at your own brokenness' since 'becoming a good person involves a lot of self-reflection, being really very self-aware' (2MS1). Molly recounted and appropriated mediational tools learned from Steve, a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO). These included intrapersonal



dialogue – asking yourself ‘why’ questions about your feelings and behaviour – as well as paraphrasing scripture. Intensive human mediation in moral virtue formation offers opportunities, but also significant risks. Molly very much looked to Steve, the young DTS leader, as an exemplar – a model of wisdom to emulate. Molly’s admiration of Steve’s wisdom continued through her second interview, with a caveat regarding rules for romantic relationships in her third interview. Patterns of moral failure and manipulation in charismatic leaders accompany damaging and abusive interactions which are coercive. These risks, inherent in intense discipling relationships in community (Moore 2003), are noted by YWAM leaders with Level 3 and 4 expertise, but not investigated in this inquiry.

When asked what connection she saw between what she was learning and the Bible, Molly explained that she is ‘super-dyslexic’. Reading the Bible had always been ‘super-difficult’, and she did not read the Bible very much before coming to DTS. She reported that DTS staff emphasized: ‘Don’t just trust us or believe us. Check the Bible’. She believed that Bible verses and the lectures are consistent in revealing a ‘good Father’ who is present, ‘paying attention’, ‘watching his kids’, and ‘very involved’ (2MS1). Although employing Bible verses and stories are cultural tools which Molly occasionally used, she did not feel confident or fluent using them. They are, however, valued and frequently employed by the wider CoP. The availability of cultural and historical tools (such as ideological narratives and examples) is empowering in forming identity, but also constraining (Penuel & Wertsch 1995:90; Tappan 2005a:52). Molly aligned herself with the CoP appropriating available tools for her use, but also resisted the use of certain tools in later sections.

#### **Molly1: Giving abused women an An Cuan, a harbour**

Molly described her home city as ‘the heroin capital of the world’ and ‘just a very sad place right now’. After ten days, Molly’s imagination had been recruited by the name of

the YWAM base, An Cuan. Molly's dream to do something good for the world would be to give abused women back home 'a harbour, a safe place to stay and a place to know Jesus' a place like An Cuan, or to care for 'young inner-city boys with absentee fathers'. She described An Cuan as a harbour where ships get restored, filled up, but then sent out again to the world. Molly did not know where the name came from, but she already identified herself with the community saying, 'We call it An Cuan'. She adopted the name's meaning and purpose, as defined by Clark in Chapter Five. Molly participated in a CoP engaging and aligning with the meaning and purpose of An Cuan. She imagined creating another type of An Cuan in her home city. Place has inspired imagination, and imagination has filled place (Basso 1996), and the narratives of others are being appropriated and transformed, reweaving Molly's vision to 'do something good for the world' (2MS1).

#### **Molly1: Adjusting thoughts, self-questioning, and refocusing towards virtue**

To engage in 'self-reflection' and become 'self-aware', Molly listed several specific mediational tools to move from vices of judgmentalism and gossip towards virtue. First, instead of going to tell someone else about someone who annoys you, you begin to control your own behaviour and keep it to yourself. Then you start 'adjusting those thoughts' of judgment and actions of gossip by using intrapersonal self-questioning asking, 'Why do I think those things about people? Why do those things? Why do I feel like that's important? Why does that need to be passed on? Why do I do these things that could hurt other people?' (2MS1). Then Molly imitated a friend's mediated action who, when she felt judgmental towards someone, would look at what bothered her and find something about the person that she liked. Molly used this tool to turn focus towards positive traits instead. Molly also employed the mediational means of a friend's confession and description of her process to change from being 'a judgy person'. The eighth property of mediated action is 'the process of taking something that belongs to

others and making it one's own' (Wertsch 1998:53). DTS participants' narratives frequently demonstrated that property. The appropriated tools, Molly proposed, can be used to readjust thoughts and behaviour from vices towards virtue. This is a process of mediating virtue formation from the external social to the internal intramental and then outward again. Here virtue formation may be taking place as appropriated tools of speech are used to seek to change oneself and one's actions towards others.

**Molly2: Getting an image from God and imagining something bigger than you**

At the end of her DTS, Molly reflected on the first time she 'got an image from God'. She described it as 'a classic girl image' of a 'gorgeous pink flower that opened up like a dandelion in the centre' and then blew away. It was 'wonderful' and 'God trying to speak' in a way Molly had not experienced before. Molly reported that she had been 'getting images' of open flowers for twenty minutes and finally came to the last image, a closed bud. She said, 'I was so lost. Why isn't it open? Open it!' Then she felt God open it, and the 'dandelion centre started to fly away'. Molly asked, 'What does this even mean?' and 'he [God] goes, "you could be that beautiful too, if you just open up."' Molly felt this was an 'inviting, very clear "Stop! Stop hiding"' (2MS2). These mediational means – embedded in the practice of prayer – involve the use of imagination and mental imagery, intrapersonal questioning, dialogue with God, and the interpretation of the mental image and words she felt God speak concerning her own need to trust and open up. Molly recounted this experience, six months before, as leading to change in her life. Her first time to receive 'an image from God' represented acquiring a new mediational tool. This enabled a possible transformation in Molly's ability to become more 'self-aware' and to make changes in becoming more open and trusting in the DTS as 'a safe place'. Her interpretation of 'God trying to speak' affords the possibility of divine power and authority to the words that came to her mind, which may also increase a sense of the importance of her self-agency with the conditional use

of ‘if you just open up’. Perhaps this indicates a desire to move from shame in ‘hiding’ towards the virtue of honesty and transparency in relationships.

Molly connected her DTS to ‘the story of Peter walking on water’, and ‘God saying, “Trust me. Trust me even when it looks crazy”’. She then quoted a line from a contemporary worship song ‘I am calling you out upon the water’, representing somewhere that is ‘uncharted’, ‘unsafe’, and ‘seems impossible’. She viewed this as a divine invitation to which you can agree and say, ‘Yes! ... OK, I am willing to try following’. Here Molly drew upon a biblical story, interpreted it with God speaking, confirmed it with a line from a worship song, and viewed all of these as offering an opportunity to agree with God. The narrative segment, ‘willing to try following’, indicates an understanding of human agency in discipleship. Increasingly varied and complex mediational signs involving insertions of new narrative fragments are used simultaneously to strengthen a resolve to grow in the virtue of faith and take risks in following Jesus. Although this appeared idealized, she followed with the recognition that ‘we all expire ... a sad way to look at life, but it’s true as we all have our time’. Therefore, Molly suggested building a people who ‘can go farther than your own time’, having ‘a vision’, and ‘something that’s bigger than you’, an understanding of the practice of community building. While recognizing human finiteness, Molly imagined a larger purpose and the possibility of building others who will carry a vision beyond one person’s lifetime. This represents a teleological narrative allowing for human freedom, supported by increasingly rich and complex mediational signs.

### **Molly2: I didn’t realize how much fear I dealt with**

Although Molly would not describe herself as ‘fearless’, she said, ‘I didn’t realize how much fear I dealt with’. Fear or Anxiety was the most frequently reported vice with 93 references in 40 files, followed by Pride, and then Laziness. In dealing with fear, Molly commented that she needed to be ‘told that something is what it is’, rather than just

walking by it. 'I didn't realize what I was feeling, but that feeling was fear ... a fear of speaking, of expressing myself honestly and truly'. To walk out of fear meant 'being unsure, but speaking anyways. It was feeling terrified, but still praying out in front of everybody'. Here mediational tools involving speech include: 1) human mediation, being told by others and thereby learning to identify fear by name, 2) speaking out despite uncertainty, and 3) praying out loud in public. Recognizing the prevalence of the vice of fear led to acting in the virtue of courage by speaking out and praying out.

Another tool she mentioned was receiving affirmation and encouragement from 'good friends'. Nevertheless, Molly noted a danger or constraint with using the tool of others' affirmation. She described what might be a ZPD as 'the biggest moment that helped the most'. Someone she 'truly respected very much on this DTS' came and said, 'I don't like what you have to say, and I don't find value in it'. Molly then realized 'everything everyone says isn't the answer'. Someone you respect does not always speak the truth. Although it can help and encourage, 'when it doesn't encourage me, it doesn't mean that it is right. And when it encourages me, it doesn't always mean that it is right'. She believed that affirmation and 'value has to come from God'. 'Learning to hear God's voice' is what helped Molly receive affirmation from God. And then learning to 'receive that when God says something is good, or that you are good, that it is true'. It involved 'taking that as his word and going, 'Yes! OK. Good' (2MS2). This indicates the exercise of the virtue of faith in verbally agreeing with God's assessment of what is good.

These mediational tools are employed to negotiate a boundary, like a permeable membrane, filtering what is taken in as good or true. Receiving the human mediation of good friends' affirmation has empowering value, but also constraints. Likewise receiving the opinion of someone who is very respected has limitations. Molly appeared to be learning to recognize that being overly dependent on what others say could be

detrimental to relying on God for true affirmation. Becoming too reliant on human mediation in a ZPD could prove damaging to development, one of the blind spots in using Vygotsky's ideas discussed in Chapter Two.

This narrative may represent growth in discernment and more selective use of the mediational means of friends' opinions from Molly's first interview when her friends' enthusiastic endorsement of DTS predominantly guided her decision making. Although Molly briefly prayed about DTS, she 'just kind of went with it' (2MS1). Now the tool of prayer involves a more complex dialogue and listening to God. Molly understands that hearing God's voice, although difficult, is what helps most in discovering what is good and true. The MKO, in Molly's understanding, is God. However, she related that it is important not just to hear, but also to accept and agree in faith with what God has said. Coding Molly's narratives indicated her understanding that walking out of the vice of fear towards the virtue of courage involved the appropriation of several complex mediational tools as noted above. These tools are rooted in Christian practices such as dialogical prayer, speaking and listening in fellowship in the community, discernment regarding the 'right' and 'good', and agreeing in faith with God.

**Molly2: I definitely came back to recognize the value of having a Christ-driven life**

When asked how her desires might have been changed or rearranged during DTS, Molly's first response was that very few of them would be the same. She quickly joked that she still desired to drive her car and missed driving. She then reflected on her family history, saying, 'I definitely came back to recognize the value of having a Christ-driven life'. Molly saw this in her parents and grandparents, but she had viewed it as an 'old dying culture' and 'didn't see value in it' for herself. Molly was beginning to weave the narrative of her family culture and history into the narrated changes in her own desires. She said now 'the desire of my heart is to do what I was made to do and to do what my Maker has for me to do' (2MS2). Molly is realigning with the values she

perceives in her family line and desires to do what her 'Maker' has designed and prepared her to do as the 'most fulfilling thing in life'. This indicates a reordering of Molly's desires strengthened by the DTS CoP. There is a vocational imagining backwards and forwards with her God-focus.

I suggest that the dislocation and the discontinuity created by leaving home and joining the DTS, a new CoP, and the continuity established by selectively inserting and reweaving narratives of family and home and previous communities with the present CoP and an imagined future, are all important processes in moral learning and identity formation. Together these processes can develop self-awareness of 'the narrative order of a single human life' (MacIntyre 2007:187), or in Vygotsky 'an integral biographical plan of personality ... a main line of development which transforms the history of a man's life from a row of disconnected and separate episodes into a connected, integral, life-long process' (2004a:192). Vygotsky's ontological genetic analysis provides a lens to observe this in Molly's case.

At this point, Molly reflected that she 'must be a pretty bad DTS student', because she is 'good at avoiding the spiritual talk'. Her 'culture back at home struggles with the spiritual talk' (2MS2). Molly acknowledged different speech patterns of 'spiritual talk' in DTS that were not welcome back home and would constrain her acceptance. Molly was aware that she was consciously resisting the use of these narrative signs even as she spoke with me. Perhaps she recognized that a 'good' DTS student uses 'spiritual talk' as a sign of mastery in the CoP. Molly selected her mediational signs using speech patterns to stay aligned with her home community, rather than employing 'spiritual talk' to align with the DTS community. This resistance to 'spiritual talk' may allow for a re-voicing and reconnecting with her home cultural identity. Resistance to new signs in a new community can, nevertheless, result in shaping usage along lines influenced by those new speech patterns (Wertsch 1998:53-56).

**Molly2: We recognized that we had just shirked off a human being with a need**

Steve led Molly's DTS outreach team of ten to Burundi. Molly recounted that Steve repeatedly told the team 'you will not be saving Africa ... don't go in with this saviour complex'. Despite those warnings, she and a lot of the team 'believed we were going to' change them. Molly began her story positioning and connecting to herself back home, tracing her ontogenetic history.

I have dealt with beggars before in my life plenty of times. I live in [Large Eastern US City] back in the United States. I dealt with beggars almost every day on my way to work. I knew a lot of their names, and I got to know their faces, and I grew very cold and used to it. It makes it easier when you know their language, but it still makes you very cold and standoffish, and you don't want to address them (2MS2).

She then linked this to her narration of a significant episode, a scene of alterity. On one of their first days in a Burundi market, Molly and the team were surrounded by people calling them 'Mzungu' (foreigner or white person). The locals were desperate to sell them something, and the male members of the team were standing around the females to make sure they were not harassed. It was the end of the day, and the team was exhausted. Molly remembered the scene:

This one girl comes through, and her rib cage was protruding way out ... and you can see that her clothes clearly don't fit her properly ... you look at her legs and her arms, and you wonder how she stands ... and she walked around every single one of us. She would tap us on the shoulder or grab our arm, just lightly. Clearly, she had been hurt enough, and she would do it quickly enough that she could back away before you could spin around and swat at her ... there was just this hand out and hand on your shoulder and this desperate face ... and she said in French, 'Please, I am so hungry!' ... and half of us turned a shoulder. Some of us looked at her and said, 'I am sorry. I have nothing to give you'. But some of us completely pretended that we just didn't feel it at all (2MS2).

Molly recounted three responses to the unwanted approach of the hungry girl: 1) turning a shoulder to avoid the encounter, 2) an apologetic speech of denial while looking, and 3) ignoring and avoiding eye contact. Molly respected Steve's action:

Something just hit him. It was very real, and he saw her, not just where you see a person standing in front of you, but he saw the need, the real genuine need. And we went and bought her some food (2MS2).

Afterwards, the team discussed what had happened.

We recognized that we had just shirked off a human being with a need that we could have filled without a problem ... and we shirked her off as if she were an animal or a stone in our path ... but it will pain your heart, and it kills you a little bit inside to realize that if you put someone that you love ... in that girl's position, you recognize that people can completely disregard you as even a



person ... I am hurt to know that I am capable of that. And to recognize that I did that every day ... if you didn't go on outreach, you wouldn't notice (2MS2).

Through the tool of her own reflection and the group debriefing, Molly recognized the dehumanization she is capable of and that she practised towards beggars at home. She credited Steve with acting compassionately, contrasting that with her own and the team's disregard for another human being. Molly used the tool of substituting 'someone that you love' and recognized the alterity of outreach in Burundi as causing her to notice the pain of her indifference towards depersonalization. Molly's narrative indicates a moral change in her understanding that no one should be dehumanized through impersonal treatment and a humble recognition that she had done 'that every day' and was 'capable of that'.

## **Clem2: Humbled by God's perspective on the world**

The market scene depicted a turning point and ZPD for several in the team. Clem, a 25-year-old chef and social worker from the Netherlands, recounted the same episode as impactful. Instead of Molly's admiration of Steve's action, Clem felt angry at Steve's inconsistency. He indicated the team were all thinking, 'But we agreed not to give money and now all of a sudden you say, "I want to buy food for her". So, what is the deal with this?' Clem reported Steve's response when they debriefed:

Yeah, I was looking at how you guys were reacting. It was not looking at the person, but 'You are annoying. Go away!' If you think about it, we were there to share love and to help the needy and the poor (25CB2).

Clem said the team were convicted, but he was upset and 'really struggled with it', because they had agreed beforehand not to give out money.

Clem requested to talk privately with Steve. For Clem, it resulted in 'a discovery', and during their talk, he 'found out that there was still quite a bit of pride' in him. He said, 'Because of my background working with addicts ... I know that we can give the food now, but tomorrow she is hungry again. So, what is the long term affect?

Nothing!' Steve responded by agreeing with the value of the long term, but also pointed

out the need not to forget ‘people who need love, people who need attention, people who need everything that we need’. Steve reminded him that their purpose in coming was ‘to share the love, to share God’ (25CB2).

Amid the Christian practices of witness and works of mercy, a moral conflict emerged over the goals of these activities in the episode. Clem’s previous experience working with addicts convinced him that giving food would not address the long term cause of the girl’s poverty, but Clem also recognized a vice, his pride, after the conflict. Clem became aware that a lot of his opinion was based on his knowledge and experience from the world and ‘not really God’s wisdom’. Clem continued:

So, there on outreach ... God showed me. ‘You have your knowledge, but hey, let that go and listen to what I have to say to you and what I showed you by Jesus, that example. Can you follow that example instead of your wisdom?’ So, I think that was a big ‘in my face’ moment ... you’re still looking from your own perspective and not from God’s perspective. So, that was a big turning point in my life (25CB2).

Clem employed the tool of interpersonal dialogue with Steve to address his anger and disagreement, incorporating Steve’s responses into his narratives and understanding. Clem used the tools of God showing, dialogue with God, and God asking an invitational question. He became aware that his perspective was not synonymous with God’s perspective. The recognition of human and divine perspectival difference gave room for humility, one of the Christian virtues to develop.

Perhaps Clem is shifting from a more deontological approach (we agreed not to give out money) and a utilitarian approach (this will not solve the problem of hunger in the long term) to a virtue ethical approach (exercising God’s wisdom to love people as Jesus did). When asked to finish the sentence Clemens is ..., he replied, ‘Clemens is more and more being humbled by God’s perspective on the world, instead of his own’ (25CB2). Clem summarised that the whole DTS journey led him to learn ‘that my pride in my knowledge is not God’s pride in knowledge’. This episode of conflict appears to be a ZPD contributing to the possible formation of the virtue of humility.

### **Molly3: Choosing to get up, make time for God and be on time for things**

In her third interview, Molly compared and contrasted her time in DTS with her time in the staff development course, Equip. She felt that in DTS she was more ‘shepherded, just directed’, but in Equip she was given ‘free range’ to make her own choices. Molly was told ‘we are going to trust you to make the right decisions ... come to us when you are not sure, and you need help’. She liked ‘choosing what we learned’ for herself. She said, ‘I had to choose to get up and make time for Time Alone With God ... if this really means something to you, you can actually choose it’ (2MS3). Molly appreciated less structure and oversight, which enabled her to exercise her own agency. Molly related that she had never connected punctuality with respect until she ‘was spoken to’ during DTS that being on time was ‘a respect thing’ towards leaders, the community, and the value of the activity. Molly was now trying to ‘be on time for things’ as a habit and to instil the value in herself for multiple simultaneous goals as in Wertsch’s third property of mediated action in Chapter Two. She wanted to be on time for herself, ‘to be a good example in the community’, to respect ‘the person who is leading’, and to show that the time of participation in an activity together is valuable.

Molly has appropriated a depth of meaning introduced by human mediation in confrontation, integrated respect with punctuality, and now has multiple objectives which support her intentions ‘to be on time for things’. As indicated by Wertsch’s tenth property, power and authority are operating in these mediational tools. There are also indications of external power and authority being transformed into Molly’s sense of exercising choice and her individual human agency through internalization. Here the word, being ‘spoken to’, moves from the external to the internal and becomes a ‘means for mastering one’s own behavior’ (Vygotsky 1998:169).

### **Molly3: Picking up weird life choices from DTS**

Six months later, Molly still experienced strangeness in what she ‘picked up and kept from DTS’. In her words, they were ‘weird life choices. Not *weird*, but weird, I guess, in a way that they were different than what I was used to ... not something that I have lived in naturally before’. These were things that she wanted to do now because she saw that they are valuable. This indicated a potential reordering of desire. For instance, when having a conversation with someone, she prays as she talks to them. She advised, ‘Intercede as you talk to them, and just choose to ask God what he might want to say in this conversation because it is not just about me in this conversation’ (2MS3). Molly has appropriated a new mediational tool in which she holds simultaneous conversations. One conversation is external involving interpersonal dialogue with the person, and the other is internal with God in intercession, asking what he might want to say. Dialogues co-occur on two planes. There is an inherent desire to decentre self – ‘it is not just about me’ – expressed in this complex dialogical practice of attentively listening and speaking while interceding.

### **Molly3: We have run Faith in Conflict seminars for several years now**

After one year in the CoP, Molly interweaves her narrative identity with YWAM Northern Ireland. She felt ‘very lucky and excited’ to be part of a Faith in Conflict seminar in her home city. She said, ‘We [meaning YWAM Northern Ireland] run Faith in Conflict seminars. We have for several years now. I believe they started in Lebanon, in the Middle East, not Lebanon, Pennsylvania [chuckle]’ (2MS3). Molly went on to describe the content of the seminars, the names of key people involved, and her experience. Molly has woven her own story into the story of YWAM Rostrevor. She included herself in the history with the phrase ‘we have for several years now’, even though she has only participated one year at most. This is an example of LPP leading into a new identity. Retelling YWAM history by engaging, imagining, and aligning herself in it enabled a shared identity in a bigger story. Later in her interview, Molly

declared ‘the way I learned best was ... if we stopped talking about what identity was, and we started doing something about it’ (2MS3). She said she learned by ‘taking an active, hands-on role’. Molly’s understanding supports Penuel and Wertsch’s assertions of ‘the importance of studying identity in settings where forming identities are at stake in the course of the activity’ and that ‘mediated action, rather than an inner sense of identity’ be used as the unit of analysis (1995:89–90).

**Molly3: I take the object of my judgment and pray, and pray, and pray**

After one year, Molly continued to struggle with the vice of being judgmental and critical of other people. She said, ‘I feel really judging because I think I am critical of myself’. She says, ‘I hate it! I hate it, but it is real’ (2MS3). In her first interview, Molly identified tools of controlling her behaviour and speech, adjusting thoughts, self-questioning, and refocusing on good traits to move away from judging towards virtue. In her third interview, Molly repeated all these mediational tools, but added a new one and emphasized it. She said,

I very often will take the object of my judgment, and I will (it always sounds so silly when you say it out loud) ... pray for it. Whether it be a person, a thing, a situation, God will just, if you pray, and pray, and pray over something, it is difficult not to get a heart for it, which makes it much more difficult to be judgmental and angry about it (2MS3).

This new tool of repeated prayer, emerging from the practice of intercessory prayer, was now emphasized. Molly claimed that during DTS she learned ‘you may not be able to fix the problem, but you can really work with what you are feeling, and work from there, which can actually help a lot’. Molly continued to ‘pick out different traits that are good’ in the person and engaged in self-questioning ‘Why do I feel that way? How can I work with this? What should ... I do to change the fact that I feel this way about that thing?’ Repeated prayer is a tool to change her feelings or desires from vices of judgment and anger towards the virtue of desiring the ‘good’ – getting ‘a heart for’ the person or situation. Development is not ‘a mere training of skills to solve a problem’, but occurs as a result of undergoing ‘deep qualitative changes’ (Stetsenko 2004:509).

### **Molly3, Clem3, Esther3, and Steve2: Making mistakes in relationships**

Molly suggested that without ‘some of the mistakes that we make on DTS, you wouldn’t grow, and you wouldn’t learn’. This observation is supported by other participants’ understanding of a good learning community presented in Chapter Five. Molly had ‘a crush’ on a guy on her DTS and her leaders ‘highly advised’ her ‘not to act on it, or do anything about it during those six months’. However, that is not what happened as both became aware of their affections for each other. Molly shared that the leadership response was ‘really hard’. Molly thought things were now ‘really good’, and that she and the leadership had ‘learned to work together even better, because of these things’ (2MS3).

Clem also struggled with the approach to relationships on outreach. He was told to avoid speaking privately with Esther, the girl on the team he was attracted to. Clem talked with his outreach leader, and Steve admitted that he could have handled it better. Clem felt that he should have been trusted more, and his age (25) and experience considered. Clem suggested that a good learning community gives ‘people freedom and trust and if they make a mistake, that’s OK’ (25CB3). In general, he felt that ‘elders or trusted persons are there to be available if you seek them out’ and elders had a good healthy sense of timing as to when to step into his situation (25CB3). Clem did not view Steve as an elder, and he was not afraid to confront him. At this third interview, Esther had come to the Netherlands. She and Clem were engaged to be married. Esther also felt that the approach to relationships between guys and girls who were attracted to each other was ‘just ignore it and wait six months’. She believed that the community should ‘not put it aside, but in ways help you walk through it’ (4EK3).

Steve found it difficult to lead a DTS with his girlfriend on the staff. He said, ‘I love her, and I love spending time with her, but when you’re working like that, I didn’t know how to do it well’ (23SS2). Approaching and guiding human action in romantic

relationships requires mature wisdom in human mediators. Requests that young people deny their feelings and put them on hold for six months were not understood to be helpful by some participants. There are factors of age, inexperience, and fear of the impact of ‘exclusive relationships’ where other people feel awkward to join in. The participants advised the community to help them walk through relationships, but to do so wisely with those who have trusted maturity. YWAM/UofN has varied approaches to romantic relationships during DTS. Approaches can range from ‘What better place to meet your potential spouse?’ to ‘No romantic relationships are allowed during DTS; you are here to focus on your relationship with God’. From the participants’ understanding, the involvement of older wise leaders sensitively walking them through these relationships and mistakes would be better than just telling them to avoid or suppress their desires for relationships.

This is potentially a highly sensitive ZPD in moral formation where mediation can be beneficial or damaging. Reflection on the shared repertoire and policy on advising in romantic relationships is necessary to avoid neglect or spiritual abuse as ‘a form of emotional and psychological abuse’ in a faith setting (Oakley et al. 2018:151). The availability of ‘people at different levels of learning and leadership’ is understood by participants as a component of the good learning community presented in Chapter Five.

### **Molly’s Longitudinal Case Study Processes Summary**

Molly’s case study is presented with processes, identified through coding, occurring in the narrated order of her life during the year. See Table 6. Vygotsky’s ontogenetic analysis was used to trace the processes of becoming and microgenetic analysis to trace changes occurring in scenes such as the marketplace. Cultural historical analysis has been used throughout to connect mediated action with its context.

**Table 6 Molly Case Study Display**

<b>Molly1</b>	Leaving home and youthful discretions, priming for discontinuity, a God experience to completely change her life
	Choosing to let multiple DTS activities completely crack open her worldview
	Observing that DTS is very God-focused and all about the community
	‘Super-involved’ interactive teaching introducing theoretical knowledge that ‘blew my mind’ in a ZPD
	Admiring Steve’s leadership wisdom as a More Knowledgeable Other (MKO)
	Did not read the Bible much before DTS
	Imagining creating An Cuan at home as a safe place for abused women or boys with absentee fathers
	Adjusting thoughts, exercising self-control, and self-questioning to change from judgment and gossip
<b>Molly2</b>	Getting a mental image from God, dialoguing with God, opening up and stopping hiding
	Trusting God like Peter stepping out on the water, following and building community with a vision bigger than her lifetime
	Identifying fear, speaking out, and praying publicly
	Discerning between truth in God’s voice and other affirming or critical voices
	Reweaving desires with family history in a Christ-driven life, doing what her Maker designed her to do
	Avoiding ‘spiritual talk’ to stay aligned with her home community
	Shirking off a human being in Burundi and recognizing her dehumanizing of beggars at home
<b>Molly3</b>	Choosing to get up and make time for God
	Being ‘spoken to’ and connecting punctuality with respect for leaders, for the community, and the activity
	Decentring self, dialoguing with others, and interceding with God at the same time
	Interweaving narrative identity with YWAM Ireland history of activity
	Taking the object of judgment in repeated intercessory prayer to gain a heart for it, still adjusting thoughts, and self-questioning feelings
	Making mistakes in romantic relationships, a hard, but good, learning process

Particular attention was brought to Molly’s appropriation of various tools in her quest to become a good person. Molly selectively appropriated narrative elements and tools, reweaving her family history, YWAM Ireland’s history of activity, God speaking and giving a mental image, and occasionally a narrative of scripture into her identity. The episode in Burundi led to revelation of her dehumanizing of beggars at home and a commitment to view each human being as ‘someone you love’. Molly appreciated an



increasing degree of freedom and space for her own choices. This freedom appears significant to allow non-coercive rearrangements of desire when a CoP has intentional aims of moral virtue formation.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter maintained the narrative order of a human life in the major case study of Molly to demonstrate how DTS participants appropriate various mediational tools which may enable change. Molly became aware that engaging with the activities in an open way had the potential to ‘completely crack open your worldview’. Her intuitive understanding of the intramental process of transformation and its connection to voluntarily engaging in the activities and using their tools was similar to Vygotsky’s ideas of internalization (Vygotsky 1994:69; Wertsch 1985:61–67) and Dykstra’s understanding of the power of the multiplicity of Christian practices (1999:63; Dykstra & Bass 2010a:204). The teacher’s mediation of a conceptual tool ‘that the way you handle relationships in your life can affect the way you perceive God’ led to a breakthrough and a new capacity to understand. Molly’s description indicated a ZPD with human mediation by an MKO. This introduction of theoretical knowledge – that humans employ ‘father filters’, and previous relationships affect how God is perceived – was new for Molly, and she began to use this knowledge. The tools of focusing on God, talking to God, and asking God questions were frequently used to pursue moral change, as were tools of self-questioning. There were attempts to adjust thoughts by refocusing on positive traits or thinking of someone you love in the place of a person you are finding difficult.

Mediational tools often drew on the process of imagining. There are imagined mental images attributed to God communicating, and the interpretations involved God speaking, or ‘God trying to speak’. The place name, An Cuan, was used as a metaphor to imagine creating a harbour or safe place for people to be restored and know Jesus.

Tools of giving and receiving human affirmation and encouragement are recognized, but also the constraints and dangers of relying primarily on these, rather than the truth of ‘God’s voice’ in the practice of discernment. However, Molly resisted some signs – such as ‘spiritual talk’ as a ‘good’ DTS student – to stay aligned with her home.

Although Molly ‘dealt with beggars ... plenty of times’, the experience of outreach and a particular encounter in the market in Burundi opened her eyes to realize the way she had ignored, depersonalized, and dehumanized. This could be evidence of moral development and, if she now responds differently, could become virtue formation. This chapter incorporated additional minor cases to provide multiple viewpoints of the marketplace episode. These narratives brought a thicker description to the scenes and the human interactions as they inhabit one another’s narratives. Unlike Molly, who admired Steve as her leader and was convicted by Steve’s mediation, Clem was initially angry at Steve’s inconsistency. Through the tool of interpersonal dialogue with Steve and with God, Clem discovered that he had ‘quite a bit of pride’ and recounted how God humbled him and showed him that he lacked ‘God’s perspective on the world’. Clem appeared to move towards a virtue ethical approach (exercising God’s wisdom to love people as Jesus did) and a growing desire to rely on God in humility.

Molly used mediational tools to connect being on time with respect. She expressed multiple simultaneous goals and connected external authority with internal individual human agency. Strategies to overcome vices of judgment and anger became more varied and complex. For example, asking God questions about what he wants to say in the middle of a human conversation is a tool drawn from the practice of intercession. Molly simultaneously linked intercessory prayer, dialogue with God, and interpersonal dialogue while decentring self for the good of the other. On the whole, prayer featured more frequently and with more complexity and depth as a mediational tool as time progressed.

Tools such as advice and guidance regarding relationships were handled clumsily and resulted in frustration for those involved. However, the leadership admission that it could have been done better and ongoing discussions and one-on-ones seemed to retain trust and relationships in the CoP. These mistakes and adjustments contributed to participants' understanding of a good learning community and possibilities to re-shape practice. The hybrid theoretical framework developed in Chapter Two enabled us to see and analyse participants' understanding of moral change in the process of becoming. Multiple examples of human(s)-acting-with-mediational-means are afforded by the rich variety of activities as Christian practices are made meaningful in the sociocultural history of the community and locations. These tools were used by participants to pursue moral purposes and actions as evidenced by their understanding in their narratives. Chapter Seven presents a second major case of Dave and other minor cases to substantiate human mediational means, learning processes, and identity formation. Multiple individual case studies provide evidence of the reordering of desires towards virtues and freedom and potential moral virtue formation.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Learning to Become Good Persons: Dave's Case and Others**

#### **Introduction**

A second main case of Dave and other minor cases are presented in this chapter to demonstrate the value of a sociocultural approach to analyse mediated human action within a virtue theory framework. As Dave appropriates mediational tools afforded by engaging in the practices in the UofN DTS, we observe pronounced changes in his identity and vocational trajectories. Dave's growing understanding of the effects of the Northern Ireland conflict on his family and his movement towards reconciliation with David and other Catholics come into focus through Vygotsky's cultural historical, ontological, and microgenetic developmental lenses. We can also observe a process of the potential virtue formation of compassion towards Dave and his family through David's understanding expressed in activities. As Dave and David's intermediate steps towards virtue formation are interpreted, learning and identity formation emerge as intertwining in the process. Simon, a minor case negotiating an identity boundary in Chapter Five, is picked up in this chapter as he became critical of 'hearing God's voice' stemming from emotionally pressured conformity. The closing sections of the chapter contrast sociocultural theorists' suggestions that identity change involves constructing and positioning, with the participants' understandings involving processes of revealing and reshaping. As in the last chapter, names followed by 1, 2, or 3 refer to the time of interview data gathering. This maintains a longitudinal aspect to the moral inquiry.

#### **Learning to Become Good Persons Together**

How do UofN DTS participants learn to love 'the last, the least, the lost'? Hauerwas proposes:

any university that would be about the formation of people who can love the poor will need those who have learned to live as the poor by living with the poor. It may well be, for example, that universities that desire to have what they teach be disciplined by the Gospel have at the center of their work a L'Arche home or a Catholic Worker house (2007:200).

Frequent interaction with the poor and refugees in UofN DTSs met Hauerwas' provocative suggestion. Humans experience themselves in each other. This recognition of the self and the other, in similarities and differences, is believed to give rise to the development of language. Vygotsky and Luria concluded: 'The forming of the complex human unity of speech and practical operations is the product of a deeply rooted process of development in which the subject's individual history is closely linked to his social history' (1994:113).<sup>1</sup> As noted previously, Vygotsky's approach enables a genetic tracing along developmental lines in selected scenes in which participants inhabit their own and other's narratives.

DTS students enter a CoP that uses phrases – such as 'hearing God's voice' and 'knowing God' – as markers for contextual meaning embedded in practices of personal and corporate conversations with God. This shared language serves as a tool, which students and staff employ to engage together in negotiating meaning in their activities and trajectories of learning (Wenger 1998:174). As a tool, language is also used to imagine the self, others, and the world in multiple ways 'by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves' (Wenger 1998:176). Additionally, LPPs may invest the effort to align or not align with the broader vision and stories of the community. These responses contribute to their identity formation in relation to the CoP (Wenger 1998:175–87). The narratives also reveal the use of speech tools – such as God language – to reconfigure desires and actions. The CoP has alternative ideals and a *telos* of what it means to 'become good', as outlined in earlier chapters. The narratives reveal motivations and actions in response to these.

The emergent speech tools and shared participation in activities are closely interacting developmental processes (Vygotsky & Luria 1994:108–15). Therefore, they should be studied together, not independently. In a Vygotskian sense, development

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<sup>1</sup> More recent theories suggest that human persons have a narrative sense of self lacking in other animals (Varner 2012).

begins with the act, but at the end of development from the act ‘stands the word which becomes the act, the word which makes man’s action free’ (Vygotsky & Luria 1994:170). External social participation with others becomes internalized and emerges once again with a degree of freedom to shape the world. Narratives and practices are tightly enmeshed, and admittedly much of the formation in a CoP is unconscious. Nevertheless, the degree of freedom allows for ‘*collaborative purposeful transformation* of the world’ – a seedbed for the emergence of knowing – while learning to use tools for identity development in an activist project (Stetsenko 2009:9, italics in original). This freedom also allows for the creation of counter-cultural communities of practice where virtues may be formed.

The theoretical stances and data gathered in this research support the assumption that participants’ ‘expressed practices’ genuinely carry epistemological weight, enabling private and public ‘knowledge of God, of ourselves, and of the world’ (Dykstra 2003:175). It is this practical knowledge, gained by living and working in a worshipping, praying, hospitable community, that may assist these participants in learning to become good persons in the Christian tradition’s view of a godly person.

**Dave1: I’m not doing this anymore; I decided there and then to text Allan**

Dave is a twenty-year-old Protestant male from Belfast. His parents separated ten years ago and divorced during his DTS. Dave described his family as having a history of mental health issues. Dave lived with his maternal grandmother. He occasionally called his dad but rarely saw him. Dave worked various delivery jobs and enjoyed driving. He said he ‘mugged up’ his first year of A-Levels and so did a two-year BTech Level 3 Sports Diploma. He returned for the third year but quit after two weeks.

In his first interview, Dave spoke hesitantly and struggled to find his words. He appeared frustrated in expressing himself, and my questions caused him to think with long silences, which sometimes felt uncomfortable. As the interviewer, I was careful not

to push too hard and have him stop the interview or walk out. Dave appeared to be experiencing inner turmoil, and he expressed his anxiety about speaking in front of people. He felt displaced in a 'nationalist' town with many other nationalities on the DTS, even though he was still in Northern Ireland. A friend persuaded Dave to come to the DTS. Dave procrastinated and still had not completed his application at the time of his interview.

Two weeks ago, on a Sunday morning, Dave was delivering pizzas for Domino's when he said 'Ah, I'm not doing this anymore' and 'decided there and then to text Allan' (16DC1). Allan, also Northern Irish, was staffing the DTS. Dave's reports of guidance appeared to be influenced by immediate circumstances and how he felt at the time. Dave attributed some happenings to God's will in a fatalistic way. Allan said that Dave had been part of a small group of sixteen-year-olds Allan had gathered on Mondays after school for Guys Youth Ministry (GYM) (14AA1).

Dave tried to escape social embarrassment by avoiding speaking. He said:

All my life, I've been in the classroom setting mentality where I've just been quiet. And the first week – it was showing that. I wasn't really saying much. I barely, I wouldn't really speak that much – even little things – like answering any general question (16DC1).

He said he would never pray unless asked, and 'maybe he wouldn't have anything worth saying', but he would like to speak a bit more. In the 'Waiting on God' activity, Dave said, 'I definitely actually spoke out ... that's big for me'. This activity allowed Dave to speak out in the group. Dave continued, 'I'm sort of realizing why I am here, and I'm sort of working stuff out about myself and maybe thinking about why I act, the way I act sometimes'. When I responded that it sounded like he was becoming more self-aware, Dave replied that his one-on-one had told him, 'You've got a good awareness of yourself'. Dave guessed this was from what he wrote in his journal. Dave was beginning to reflect on his behaviour using tools of journaling and one-on-one conversation. These mediational means enabled him to question the 'why' of his behaviour, but he was very self-conscious.

**Dave1: I honestly didn't know any of these terms until I got here**

Dave was acquiring new speech tools but lacked fluency. He said that intercession is an activity he did not want to end, whereas he usually would 'start fidgeting' or have his mind wander. When asked what intercession meant for him, he replied: 'Well intercession is like prayer. That's the thing. I honestly didn't know any of these terms until I got here, like intercession prayer, Father Heart of God. Never!' I asked him to describe intercession, but he could only tell me that they were praying for South Africa. He said, 'The first intercession time I did, I just can't. I don't know what to say about it. I can't remember' (16DC1). Wertsch's seventh property of 'knowing how' or 'mastery' (1998:50-53) reveals Dave's novice inability to connect speech tools in intercession.

Dave mentioned 'Liturgy' together at 6:55 am followed by 45 minutes of 'Time Alone With God'. 'This Monday' he stated, 'I just randomly prayed, "I just want a sense of you, God."' Dave was using a tool of talking to God, but he described the week as a 'massive roller coaster' and said, 'I don't know how to put it into words really'. Again, Dave lacked fluent mediational means to express what he had been doing. I suggested that perhaps he had not yet known how to make sense of it all. Dave sounded defensive replying, 'I think my understanding of God and why things are happening in the DTS and in my past life has improved a lot'. He added, 'I have sensed God. He did definitely answer that prayer ... it is nearly impossible not to sense God here' (16DC1).

Dave reported that pre-DTS, he was 'terrible studying' and never really thought about 'how does this apply'. Now he was reflecting in his journal, focusing, and 'thinking about how to apply this to my life'. When asked what he was learning, Dave said, 'I probably learned about myself talking one-on-one with a few people'. In this sentence, Dave incorporated the new language of DTS – 'talking one-on-one' – as a tool to learn about himself. Dave wanted to learn to talk about himself, and others 'to feel safe enough' to talk with him. He would like to learn to listen and to show love,



‘knowing God’s got my back’. Dave hoped to develop greater ease in conversation, supported by confidence in God. Dave did not read his Bible much. Now he was ‘getting bombarded with Bible verses and taking them down’. He wanted to ‘look up stuff’ and try to ‘see how it applies’ to his life. He suggested the ‘parable of The Lost Son’ as something to which people might relate. Dave wanted to use Bible verses and stories to ‘deal with certain situations’, ‘applying’ it to his life, as well as to help others with their problems. He desired to appropriate the tool of scripture.

Dave felt ‘apprehensive about mentioning Northern Ireland and the Republic’ and did not want a united Ireland. He avoided the subject, living ‘with two people from the South’. His roommate, also called David, was a Catholic from Dublin. To avoid conflict, Dave dodged sensitive subjects and deflected with humour to ‘wind people up. Americans are funny to wind up, anyway’ (16DC1).

When asked how he would describe a good person, Dave replied, ‘I can’t put that into words’. I pressed him a little more, and his description was ‘somebody you can just chill around’. When I paused and asked for more, Dave said, ‘I just can’t think of anything’. There was tension in the interview, and Dave interjected:

Like you’re asking me these questions. These questions are – I have actually never thought about these questions before. Ever. And they just make me think. I am probably going to go off after this and think about it (16DC1).

At this point, I realized afresh that interviewing was itself an intervention. I was a human mediator using the tools of interview questions in what may have been a ZPD. I drew attention to questions Dave had not considered before, and he indicated that he would continue to think about them. Other participants reported that the interviews had helped them to process and reflect. This is one reason for not interviewing more frequently; the research strategy was not experimental. Interview questions introduce new mediational means and a potential transformation in power as participants appropriate them for their own use (Wertsch 1998:64-66). Interviewing students during their DTS could be a fruitful pedagogical addition.

Dave reported anger as his vice. When it built up, he tried to keep ‘a lid on it, for the sake of other people’. Dave tried to ‘keep it under control’ until he was alone and not ‘let anybody see it ... It wouldn’t be great’, and he might try to pray at the end. In this first interview, Dave could see no other means of dealing with his anger except being on his own and ‘being able to just go and lie down’ (16DC1). He lacked tools and emotionally suppressed his anger.

Dave was selected as an intense case of dramatic change in his learning and identity formation through his acquisition and appropriation of mediational tools afforded by his time in the new CoP. Bronfenbrenner and Ceci’s third hypothesis in ‘Nature-Nurture Reconceptualized in Developmental Perspective’ (1994) proposes that

If persons are exposed over extended periods of time to settings that provide developmental resources and encourage engagement in proximal processes to a degree not experienced in the other settings in their lives, then the power of proximal processes to actualize genetic potentials for developmental competence will be greater for those living in more disadvantaged and disorganized environments (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci 1994:579).

Individual case studies, such as Dave’s, provide some evidence confirming their hypothesis. However, the individual’s attitude and desire to learn and change was understood to be very significant.

### **Dave2: I started to say I want to know more of God**

In his second interview six months later, Dave had found his voice and spoke fluently in long paragraphs. He recounted emotional stories of breaking free from social anxiety, fear, and frustration. For the first time, he had in-depth conversations with his father. Dave had spoken publicly in different locations, including Catholic youth groups. Reading the gospels strengthened Dave’s eschatological hope in the Kingdom of God and his identity as ‘a servant in the kingdom of God’. He engaged with groups in identificational repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation in collaboration with his Irish Catholic roommate and others. He planned to study at YWAM Rostrevor in the six-month staff development course, Equip. Dave continued to struggle with the vice of internal anger fuelled by social anxiety, but no longer primarily dealt with it on his own

or engaged in 'vile' language. The mediational tools Dave employed were now plentiful and varied compared to his difficulty in speaking and thinking six months earlier, and this fed into changes that have moral import.

Dave repeatedly used the phrase 'I remember' throughout this interview, as many as sixty times. Although it may just be a figure of speech, he used the phrase only twice in his longer first interview. Both times it referred to significant experiences. I propose that it is a linguistic tool and phrase that Dave used to denote and call to mind meaningful experiences. Dave used the tool of speaking to achieve his desired mindset. He said, 'I did have a mindset I wanted, I started to say I want to know more of God, and I just want to know more' (16DC2). Dave believed the DTS was 'life-changing' and possibly the best decision he ever made.

When asked what activities impacted him, Dave responded: 'I remember the time I broke off a few chains, like broke off a lot of fear and being afraid to talk in front of people. I got frustrated one day ... it was 14 November'. Here Dave employed the tool of imagery, seeing fear as chains. During the practice of worship observed at the start of DTS, lyrics about breaking chains were sung repeatedly. For example, 'There is power in the name of Jesus' followed by 'To break every chain' repeated eighteen times (Worship1). Sixteen minutes later, Clem prayed out 'Lord, you are so powerful. One word and you break every chain that we have ... Please give us courage ... you will give us freedom' (25CB in Worship1). Vygotsky's analysis enables us to trace Dave's microgenetic sign mediated action modifying his individual behaviour by breaking off chains of fear back to social participation in Christian practices of worship and prayer. In these practices, the phrase 'breaking chains' is connected with Jesus' power, the virtue of courage to overcome fear, and the gift of freedom.

Dave continued:

I was talking to Allan and went for a walk saying I was really frustrated about things and why I wasn't really feeling anything ... And I remember the next day going up, up to the mountain, and I was just doing a little Sunday walk ... and I started walking and talking to God. I remember just

being really frustrated and saying, 'Why do I not feel free, God? Why am I not getting more from this? Why am I not feeling that much?' And I knew there was so much more from me (16DC2).

Allan played a role as a friend and mentor for Dave to express his frustration. Allan described himself as an 'unofficial one-on-one' with Dave and recalled the time Dave was 'frustrated and not really connecting with God'. Allan challenged him and said, 'Well that's OK. You're frustrated, but let's turn that frustration into ... having a breakthrough and seeing God move, rather than turning that frustration into turning away and disappointment' (14AA2). Allan acts as an MKO in a potential ZPD to offer human mediation that may enable Dave to move from frustration and quitting to perseverance and faith in God for a breakthrough. This ZPD could be viewed as a potential site of moral development. The next day Dave went up the mountain talking to God and pouring out his frustration in question asking. Dave felt that something was holding him back. Allan claimed Dave had 'repressed himself' (14AA2). Dave also remembered 'going to the base counsellor' and sharing. Again, Dave was using human mediators to speak out and express his feelings. Dave remembered Simon leading the 'Seeking God' time and asking 'What's holding us back as a community?' Dave spoke up in class and said he thought 'it was not letting go and giving everything' and 'being fearful'. Dave remembered it as one of the first times he did not feel 'afraid to speak out in front of class' (16DC2). Dave spoke out publicly in the group setting.

### **Dave2: God, I'm going to jump in, because why not?**

Nevertheless, Dave recounted that moving into worship, he still felt frustrated that he had not asked himself what was holding him back and had not dealt with fear. He remembered 'storming out of worship' and 'sitting down by the water's edge' saying, 'God, I'm going to jump in, because why not? I have the freedom to do so. Why would I not jump into the water?' (16DC2). The tide was up, and Dave said,

'God, if I jump into the water I'm going to let this all go and scream' ... 'What is stopping me from jumping in? Why am I not?' I kept saying to myself. And my body and my mind were saying, 'Don't jump in. It is cold. It's not nearly deep enough' (16DC2).

As well as telling God and talking to himself in intrapersonal dialogue, Dave had a sense of his body and mind talking to him. Dave then imagined himself in the water shouting and ‘just let go of the railings and fell in’. He remembered ‘roaring under the water’, and something broke and released in him. He said, ‘I was releasing all this frustration and anger. I remember coming up out of the water and still shouting. I couldn’t actually control it’. This remembered episode may represent a ‘sign act’ as water carries prophetic symbolism of new life in the Christian tradition. Dave thought ‘that day on the DTS really broke a lot of chains’. Sociocultural theory helps us notice Dave employing multiple mediational tools and signs to move from perceived vices of fear and anger towards freedom.

Dave remembered feeling ‘really good’, ‘buzzing’ the next day. In worship, Steve said, ‘if you can’t feel free to worship here, well, how are you going to do it outside of this area where it is encouraged?’ (16DC2) Dave also remembered Kristin standing on her chair and saying, ‘God I don’t want to be waist-deep any more. I want to be fully submerged, my feet off the ground in the water for you’. Dave recalled words and experiences in a practice of worship as others inhabited his narrative. At this point Dave said,

Something there hit me, and I just broke. And I remember weeping. And I stood on my chair as well, and with arms stretched wide in front of everybody, I just felt, I have never felt so free in my life to worship (16DC2).

Dave engaged in a sign act that imitated Kristin in a social practice of worship. He appropriated the authoritative words of Steve and internalized them. In his understanding, this resulted in emotional change and feeling free to worship.

Dave left the room to go to the toilet. When he returned, he claimed, ‘something ... like God’ came over him. Steve said, ‘The presence of God is here’ and Dave was crying and said ‘Yeah, he is here big time!’ He ‘felt something really powerful’ (16DC2). The setting for learning in Pentecostal formation is ‘the worshipping community’ and an expectation of the Spirit’s empowering presence to live the

Christian faith in the community and in the world (Johns 2010:129). In the practice of worship, one of the ‘liberating arts’ (Glanzer et al. 2017:11), Dave claimed an encounter with God’s presence, an ‘awareness of certain *realities*’ (Dykstra 2003:172, italics in original). Dave led a ‘Seeking God’ activity the next week urging the group to ask God, ‘Why are we afraid? What are we fearful of?’ Dave turned his own experience of transformation in the internal plane outward to collaboratively transform the group experience (Stetsenko 2017:212-216). He closed with a moral declaration, ‘Because that is what I experienced, and it was good!’ Dave claimed that he was no longer afraid to speak out and felt free to speak and share his testimony in churches, providing evidence of the virtue of courage.

**Dave2: My allegiance to Christ is first and foremost**

Dave credited his men’s small group as helping him change by being ‘able to talk about anything’ and something he ‘looked forward to most of the week’. It became a new desire. This was a new mediational means because although he had a good group of Christian friends, he had ‘never really had that deep and intimate way of talking ... and it was very good fun as well’. He recounted that on his DTS journey he moved from ‘never having been to a Catholic church, to actually ministering to Catholics in a Catholic church’. Dave reported that now, his ‘identity in Christ is first and foremost before anything else’, before his nation and church background. He declared again: ‘My allegiance to Christ is first and foremost’ (16DC2).

I asked Dave how this change had come about, considering his background as a Protestant from Belfast. He said they were supposed to visit different churches on Sundays during DTS. He attended a Presbyterian church, but at a Catholic church he said, ‘I didn’t feel I was very respectful’. This indicates growing self-awareness regarding his attitudes. Dave decided to ask Steve, ‘Is it OK if I go to the Catholic church again?’ Steve agreed. The DTS offered opportunities for fellowship with

congregations from different church streams. Dave recognized something was ‘weird’ about his response to the Catholic church. He chose to move towards alterity and kept going to the Catholic church, putting himself in there ‘combatting’ what he had ‘heard from everybody always, Protestant, Loyalist, Unionist type things, telling lies about Catholics and nationalists’. Dave had felt out of place in Rostrevor because he described it as a nationalist area at the beginning of his DTS. Dave remembered the role his Catholic bunkmate, ‘David from the South’ played in the change. Dave questioned his ‘struggles of identity. Are you British? Are you Northern Irish? Are you Irish?’ Identity is complicated due to national and church divisions. Dave said, ‘It’s strange ... it’s hard because my granddad was killed by the IRA, and I never knew him’ (16DC2).

Dave connected his ontogenetic family history now openly weaving this into his story. Dave talked to his dad more deeply because he had ‘never asked these questions’. He said, ‘I always distanced myself ... and just kept myself to myself’ with ‘a lot of social anxiety’ and the whole ‘You’re a man. You can’t really talk about your feelings’. Instead of distancing, isolating himself, and avoiding discussing emotions, Dave was using tools of empathetic speaking and listening with his father and connecting his emotions with his family history. Perhaps Dave appropriated these tools from his men’s small group. Dave had never spoken with his dad about it, and his father said, ‘For the last thirty years, I thought about it every day’. It hurt Dave to realize he never knew how much it affected his dad. Dave reflected, ‘Obviously all these feelings, maybe why I was against nationalism, was because they killed my granddad’ (16DC2).

During a reconciliation and peace week in Shankill/Falls, Dave shared about his grandfather’s death and broke down with the class. The DTS visited a place of conflict and addressed the issue of reconciliation through identificational repentance. Dave reported that David from the South said, ‘On behalf of nationalism, Republic of the South, of the IRA ... sorry for what happened to your granddad’. Then Dave from the

North did the same for any fears Protestants and Loyalists ‘had put into him’ (16DC2).

Both Dave and David identified with Daniel in the Bible, who repented for the sins of his people. Several participants reported this episode as impactful.

**David2: I decided to pray the prayer of Daniel 9 and to fast**

In his journal, David from the South gave his side of the story. While asking Dave about his understanding of saints, the ‘conversation strayed to the fact that his granddad was killed by the IRA 31 years ago, and that it had a devastating effect on his family’ (8DJJ). Up until then, David had assumed they were getting on well because the Troubles had not affected their generation. David realized that it was ‘a massive step for Dave to pursue unity with me and with the Catholic church’. David reported that his ‘heart broke’.

As they visited Downpatrick the next day, David became aware of how much division had affected the towns and all the ‘hate and hurt’ behind it. David was then convicted by Daniel in the Bible, who repented on behalf of his people when he had done nothing wrong. David from the South wrote: ‘I decided to pray the prayer of Daniel 9 and to fast for a bit for the sins of the people who killed Dave’s granddad’. David prays and fasts, appropriating a scripture text and ancient practices in Daniel. David wove the story of Daniel into his own story. In his imagination, he drew from the historical context of the prophet’s identificational repentance with his ancestors’ sins and the sins of the IRA.

David left the Open Mic night to research the killing and wrote: ‘I had never read the story of a death with that much sympathy and empathy. When we went to the monastery on Friday, God spoke to me in so many ways’. Father Thierry had spoken on the dangers when the church ‘becomes big and wealthy’ and that ‘the body of Christ needs to be set apart from the world’. David wrote: ‘I never knew what to think of the Reformation ... I had some issues with it (understandably being a Catholic), but this



opened up my eyes to the fact that the church needed to be shaken up and challenged’ (8DJJ). David used the teaching of a respected authority in his tradition – a Benedictine monk – to reframe and question his own understanding and reading of church history, opening him to the Christian practice of social criticism. This led him to become even more empathetic and sensitive to the issues of conflict and reconciliation, resulting in the mutual bearing of suffering. All of these are Christian practices identified in Chapter Five.

An elaborate preparation and use of mediational means took place before the public repentance and reconciliation. David journaled:

The identificational repentance on Wednesday was crazy. I had stayed up late the night before repenting on behalf of my people and asking God to show me some of how Dave was hurting so that I could know better what I [was] repenting for and maybe to learn how to go about it. I was nervous all morning ... I was worried that I wouldn’t do it sincerely being fully aware of what I was repenting of (8DJJ).

David engaged in the practices of repentance and dialogical prayer ‘asking God to show ... how Dave was hurting’, accompanied by a desire for empathetic understanding.

David wanted to repent with sincerity and full awareness.

This was a rehearsal for the enacted narrative to take place the next day, but it was more than a rehearsal of technique. It was an attempt to bring a fully embodied presence into the action that David planned to perform. He journaled:

When I stood up, I didn’t feel nervous, and I knew instantly that I would repent with complete sincerity. I felt the emotion and compassion well up in me. I wanted nothing more than just to help Dave be free from the hurt that my people had caused him ... It was amazing to see how God was moving rapidly, and it was started by my listening to his will (8DJJ).

On Wednesday, David reported: ‘I felt the emotion and compassion well up in me’.

This indicates a reordering of desires, an intensification of compassion. I propose it indicates genuine development in a ZPD (Stetsenko 2004:509). There were multiple goals at work simultaneously such as to be ‘fully aware’, to act with ‘complete sincerity’, to repent, and ‘to help Dave be free from the hurt’. Wertsch’s third property helps us notice the simultaneous multiple goals necessary to interpret mediated action (1998:32-34). David understood that his listening to ‘God’s will’ initiated the action and

resulted in God ‘moving rapidly’. Once again, there is a strong God-focus in the expressed practice, depth of relationships and security in the DTS community, and the non-coerced choices of individuals to pursue reconciliation together. David’s case evidenced moral development in relation to the virtue of compassion towards Dave and his family.

**Simon2: My dad suffered, and I have suffered, and my children will suffer**

Identificational repentance and reconciliation continued between Catholics and Protestants and then expanded between England and Ireland, South Africa and the Dutch, Israel and Lebanon, and America and the Middle East (16DC2). DTS participants reported these experiences of reconciliation in interviews. Simon, a Palestinian Israeli, spoke of his grandfather’s eviction ‘from his home, a refugee in his own country’ (1SM2). Simon said, ‘My dad suffered, and I have suffered, and my children will suffer if they live there’. Recognizing that he had wrongly taken sides when entering Northern Ireland, he said: ‘I identified myself with the Irish Catholics because they were colonised by the Protestants, as Palestinians are colonised by the Israelis. I identified with their pain. And I took a side in a conflict that wasn’t mine’ (1SM2). On the other hand, Matthew, a Maronite Catholic, dealt with a historical massacre in his Lebanese village by Palestinians (7MA3). Simon and Matthew were roommates and on outreach together in Burundi.

DTS affords opportunities to be uprooted and displaced from previous social relationships but also to be brought into close relational proximity with those who are ‘other’. The other’s identity could be connected to historical enmity and pain. In the DTS CoP, tools of vulnerable communication, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation, and friendship building can be learnt. This learning is not primarily understood as cognitive acquisition of ideas, but as relational processes of human action embedded in practices with a *communal quality* (De Kock 2015:9, italics in original).

The relational proximity is face to face, living in the same house, sometimes sleeping in the same room, eating the same food, and travelling together. Learning and identity changes are closely intertwined (Vianna & Stetsenko 2011:320).

A lowering of power distance in social relations allows for greater trust and deeper connections in the practice of fellowship. Relational longevity can contribute to stability; one constraint is the six-month timeframe. I observed on Facebook that many participants in this DTS continued to interact and meet up in different parts of the world in the following years. Simon is one of those. In his DTS evaluation, he said, ‘My relationship with God came alive when I found there was a clear dialogue’ (1SM2), and ‘hearing God’s voice’ was impactful. Six months after being home, he had reservations about aspects of his DTS.

**Simon3: You could make them believe in something that is maybe not real**

In his third interview, Simon said DTS ‘was such a safe place’ that he could experiment a lot, but he also felt that things were ‘over-spiritual’ and ‘too emotional’ as a Middle Easterner. Back home, Simon struggled with anger. He had to go through Israeli checkpoints knowing his school friends were in the IDF, the Israeli army, while he had chosen to live in Palestine. Simon had become critical and sceptical of the ‘idea of hearing God in your mind, in a voice’ and interceding for two hours when he could only pray alone for five minutes (1SM3).

As an eighteen-year-old – leaving his strong and close-knit Christian family for the first time – Simon wanted to fit in. At times he felt ‘very uncomfortable’ with himself looking back, especially in ‘praying for people and saying that it was God or something like that’. Simon reported being physically pushed during a public prayer time to be ‘surrendered to the Holy Spirit’ (1SM3). For Simon, YWAM lacked foundational biblical teaching, and he said:

I think it is a very dangerous road just to appeal to your emotion because first of all, it could be not right. And second of all, if you’re too embedded in this emotional stuff, when you’re out of that context, you feel like there isn’t that anymore. And you start missing it (1SM3).

Looking back, Simon said he disagreed with a lot of the teaching and advice from staff. He thought it was dangerous for young people to come with their problems, without family, and that ‘you could make them believe in something that is maybe not real’. Although he was ‘very happy’ he did the DTS, Simon had his ‘disagreements’ and would have been even more ‘challenging and outspoken’ towards staff than he was (1SM3).

In an interview a year earlier, Austin, a 27-year-old American DTS staff with a Masters in Peace Studies, identified Simon’s struggle as someone who ‘doesn’t really feel the voice of God’. Austin said, ‘What would be really dangerous for us is to try to force him to fake it’ (26AR1). Simon felt emotional pressure and later rejected the mediational tool of ‘hearing God’s voice’. As regards the danger of groupthink or indoctrination, Austin responded that if you ‘get an internship with a football club, you are going to get indoctrinated into their worldview’. Austin suggested that being ‘grounded in a wider Christian tradition’, having a diversity of leaders, wisdom, and sensitivity to power dynamics, manipulation, and coercion is essential (26AR1). Seven months after our third interview, Simon messaged me that he had accepted a Durham University offer to study philosophy and theology.

### **Dave2: Hammering that into me, into my mindset**

Dave described ‘journeying through’ the reconciliation as ‘hammering that into me, into my mindset’. Sociocultural theory enables us to notice cultural tools employed in the formation of mind in social activities, as scriptural narrative signs in Daniel are reimagined and re-enacted. Dave understood it as ‘hammering through my identity in Christ, like big time’. Dave condemned different Christians hating each other as ‘just so wrong in itself’ (16DC2). When asked to finish the sentence Dave is ..., Dave quickly responded: ‘Dave is a servant in the kingdom of God ... and not any earthly kingdom or tribalistic whatever ... that’s been really hammered into me’ (16DC2).

Later in his interview, Dave mentioned his attempts to change the thinking of his friends in Belfast by choosing to go to them ‘with a loving mindset’. He recounted the Crusades, genocides in Burundi, Rwanda, and Lebanon, and then his friends’ views. Dave claimed to love ‘Jesus’ teaching first and foremost’. He quoted: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and whatever. Then start to love your neighbour as you love yourself’. He used the tool of quoting scripture and logic to claim, ‘obviously, you won’t murder if you love God and you love your neighbour’ (16DC2). According to Allan, Dave was interacting on social media with his ‘ultraconservative’ friends in Belfast, while he was working in Lebanon. Dave communicated that many of the refugees were children – who had fled war with their families – not terrorists or people to be afraid of (14AA2).

### **Dave2: I remember just finding real hope**

Dave went on outreach to Dublin, when he wanted to go to Fermanagh, which was home in Northern Ireland. He said, ‘I got stuck in Dublin, and I was like, ‘Ach, whatever’. He visited David and Kylie’s ecumenical Catholic community and ‘it was really good’. Dave worked with inner-city kids in Ballymun, North Dublin which reminded him of the Shankill and the Falls area of Belfast. Dave was visiting a site of alterity, otherness, a Catholic community and a deprived area of Dublin, but he connects it with his experience of his home in Belfast. Dave engaged in ‘prayer walking’ through Ballymun. Prayer, combined with walking through the location of otherness, led to a desire for Ballymun, Dublin – a place he previously had no desire to go – to experience Jesus. With these tools, Dave’s desires were being changed.

Then he said, ‘And God was putting a big massive picture for me, for Ireland’. God was attributed with giving a picture for the whole of the island. Dave said, ‘I *want* to be a part of this, to see fruit in Ireland’. Seeing a bigger picture of Ireland was connected with a change of desire again. Dave continued that the ‘whole united Ireland

and politics, North and South is getting stupid’. However, he connected a place of alterity, Ballymun, with a place of familiarity, Shankhill/Falls, and declares them as similar. Dave recounted Kylie’s comment, ‘It seems like there is no hope’. In Ballymun, they visited a traveller, John, who was from the area, and ‘he was so different. He was so in love with Jesus’. Here Dave recalled a human exemplar, John, as a sign of hope for change. Dave declared, ‘It’s not hopeless! ... there is hope for areas, hard-core areas like West Belfast and North Dublin and all of this Ireland. That was really good’. Dave made declarations of hope and goodness as tools and connected deprived places in Dublin and Belfast as he began to identify with ‘all of this Ireland’ (16DC2).

Dave connected this hope with the biblical narrative seeing patterns in the Call of Abraham and the Great Commission to obey Jesus’ words to go and ‘preach to every creature’. He said, ‘That really got me on fire to go out’. He described having a ‘fatalistic mindset about rapture, Armageddon, and things like that’ when he was on outreach, and ‘that the world has to go to crap before Jesus comes’. However, his mentor, Allan, ‘really set me down, explaining, “It doesn’t have to be like that. And that anything I do for God’s kingdom is not going to get torn down in the end”’. A mindset change is afforded by a human mediator telling the biblical narrative in a different way to the fatalistic story Dave was living in. Dave had been reading Matthew and Jesus’ parables imagining God’s kingdom as a tree. Dave continued:

I remember having a sense like a real hope and real happiness ... nothing I do is in vain ... anything I do builds God’s kingdom. In a sense, yeah, leaves fall off the tree, and branches sometimes get cut off, but the tree never dies. God’s kingdom never dies. And I remember just finding real hope (16DC2).

Here are tools of reading the Bible, considering the parables, and using the image or metaphor of a tree to imbue his actions with meaning and purpose. These narratives are examples of a young man and the tools he used in a process of reordering desires. Evidence suggests how Dave understood his mindset was being changed from fatalism to one of ‘real hope and real happiness’. A teleological narrative seems to pull Dave

from a 'fatalistic mindset' into one that expresses the virtue of hope and acts to build 'God's kingdom', as he discovers that his actions are meaningful.

**Dave2: Jesus is a man of peace, and I am a man of peace because I have Jesus**

Dave was trying to 'deal with it [internal anger] a lot better' and now evaluated some responses as dangerous. 'Every time I get angry, I try not to show it, but I go off on my own somewhere and try to keep it all in. And it can end up killing you'. He was now 'relying on God in a big way, praying in the moment if you are feeling that way'. Dave revealed the content of his dialogue with God: 'God, you know I am not like this. I don't want this'. He also said, 'I am giving it all to you'. Dave used these phrases to calm himself and continued: 'Really, I cling onto God ... in moments like that'. Dave associated the anger with 'a lot of social anxiety' and remembered that his language 'was just vile. It was awful. It wasn't healthy at all'. As he prays, he remembers and makes the statement: 'Jesus is a man of peace, and I am a man of peace because I have Jesus'. Rather than relying on emotional repression, isolation, distancing, and 'vile' language, Dave employed new tools of speaking to God and to himself. He claimed to cling to God, declare before God that he is 'not like this', and declare that he does not want this 'internal anger'. Instead of the vice of anger, he strongly desired the virtue of peace. Dave declared his identity as 'a man of peace' and connected this identity with Jesus as 'a man of peace'. He claimed to be learning to recognize his emotions and say 'I feel really off here and angry' (16DC2).

Dave claimed that his desires changed during DTS and said: 'One of the things I desire is to get closer to God ... I'll never get fully closer to God, but that's what I desire now, big time'. Dave spoke of relationship with God in terms of proximity, getting closer. He continued: 'I desire to expand God's kingdom and God to give me wisdom in speaking ... keep strengthening me, and give me a voice to do good work for him and ... to guide me in life'. These expressions of desire, such as for the virtue of

wisdom, are very God-focused. Dave announced, ‘I just have to trust him ... and keep that trust up’ (16DC2). Trusting God or persevering faith, another virtue, is seen as a means to pursue these desires. Dave positioned himself before the DTS as having ‘a lot of social anxiety’ and refusing to speak in class. Now his desires involve speaking with wisdom. He gave a six-minute testimony at the DTS graduation telling how his ‘heart broke’ for the refugees in Lebanon as they struggled with hopelessness.

We have a heart for everybody in God’s kingdom, because it doesn’t matter what nation, what background, what past, what you have done, God still loves you. God still wants you, so I should love you and want you in God’s kingdom, because I am part of God’s kingdom, and I want to be a loyal servant of God’s kingdom. And that’s what he wants me to do (16DCT).

Dave’s identity and relationships with those who are ‘other’ have been affected through social participation in the DTS. He desires to love and include them, loyally serving in God’s kingdom. Engaging in the practice, or ‘liberating art’, of service amongst refugees enabled changes in his identity. Dave appeared to be growing in the virtue of love, learning to love God and those who are ‘other’.

### **Dave3: If you want to teach people, you have got to do it first**

Six months later, in his third interview, Dave still expressed concerns about his confidence to lead older DTS students as a 21-year-old. This probably indicated a continued struggle with anxiety. However, he declared: ‘I have never been as confident – ever – in my life as I am now. I never felt more confident in hearing God’s voice’ (16DC3). Dave continued to employ language tools such as ‘hearing God’s voice’. His fluency increased markedly from his first interview. Instead of long uncomfortable pauses, he answered my questions rapidly. For example, he responded that a good community provides ‘a safe way to be vulnerable with each other and tender to each other’s needs’. When asked about a good learning community, Dave quoted YWAM Foundational Value 12, ‘Do first, then teach’ and then said, ‘If you want to teach people you have got to do it first. You have got to learn from your failures and your mistakes. Mistakes are only a failure if you don’t learn from it’. Dave’s understanding of learning



from failures and mistakes was shared by others, as noted in the composite understanding in Chapter Five. Dave appropriated language learned in the CoP, connected it with his own experience, and turned it into fluent responses. Instead of struggling to come up with a description of a good person as someone ‘you can chill with’, he quickly replied, ‘A good person is someone who puts other people’s needs above theirs’ (16DC3). This response is similar to a Christian understanding of love.

### **Dave’s Longitudinal Case Study Processes Summary**

Dave’s case study includes processes, summarized in Table 7, of identity development through powerful, emotional, mediated experiences with God and others.

**Table 7 Dave Case Study Display**

Dave1	Displacement from home to DTS located in ‘nationalist’ area
	Significant mentor and mediator bridging boundary to DTS
	Avoiding social embarrassment by remaining silent
	Becoming self-aware through one-on-ones and journaling
	Inability to articulate and frustration but speaking out in the DTS group
	Acquiring new language and desiring more of God in new activities
	Lacking Bible knowledge and application
	Avoiding conflict through humour, winding people up
	Dealing with anger and social anxiety through isolation and repression
	Avoiding speaking and difficulty thinking
	Making him think with interview questions
Dave2	Remembering and recounting significant emotional experiences of freedom
	Expressing frustration to a mentor and then God through question asking
	Mentor turning frustration towards breakthrough, not disappointment
	Breaking chains through prophetic acts, sensing God’s presence in worship
	Speaking publicly and sharing testimony in churches without fear
	Sharing intimately in men’s small group
	Pursuing alterity in the Catholic church and combatting lies
	Struggling with identity and painful history, declaring allegiance to Christ first
	Identifying and reconciling enemies through repentance and forgiveness
	Hammering in identity as a servant in the Kingdom of God
	Loving Jesus and his teaching first and foremost
	Persuading ultraconservative friends
	Forgetting Northern Ireland convicted to remember where he comes from
	Connecting hope in hopeless places with unity across borders for all Ireland
	Connecting own story meaningfully with patterns in biblical narratives
	Relying on, praying, and dialoguing with God to change from anger by identifying with Jesus as a man of peace
	Desiring to get closer to God to expand God’s kingdom, and receive wisdom in speaking

Dave3	Hearing God's voice confidently, but with some anxiety as new DTS staff
	Speaking fluently
	Envisioning possible future vocations in criminal justice or IJM
	Taking initiative in reconciliation with Northern Irish youth at home
	Interweaving his narrative identity with the YWAM CoP
	Leading the team to Lebanon, no longer an LPP, now an experienced CoP member

Dave's future goal was to work with something like IJM (International Justice Mission). He considered how aspects of forgiveness and reconciliation could be brought into the criminal justice system to deal with prisoners. His use of tools, such as connecting scripture with the world, had become much more complex. He would consider doing a university degree in criminology or sociology 'if God put that in front of me'. He referred to God guiding and finished, 'But I'm here. I decided to stay here' (16DC3). In his first interview, Dave lacked self-initiated decision making. Passivity is a danger in waiting for God to guide, but Dave seemed to accept responsibility for deciding to stay.

Dave had begun to plan and shape experiences for others. He desired to bring new DTS students to share their stories and testimonies with thirty young people in his youth club in Belfast. Dave expected that introducing young people in Belfast to others, such as a student from Syria, would be mutually beneficial. Also, he was taking personal initiative, indicating 'It would be my own time and petrol' (16DC3). Dave's identity remained connected with his home church in Belfast, but it had also become intertwined with the identity of the YWAM community. Describing the decision-making process for outreach locations, he said, 'The last time we went to India was two years ago'. As in Molly's case, Dave was not part of the YWAM community, nor did he go to India two years ago, but he identified with the history and referenced Steve in his narrative. Dave said: 'I went on outreach as a trainee to Lebanon, and now I'm going to be helping to lead the team to Lebanon' (16DC3). His initial entry as an LPP has become a trajectory further into the CoP. The identificational repentance and reconciliation he experienced as a Northern Irish Protestant whose grandfather was killed by the IRA became

internalized. Dave used it to seek to bring others into an experience of reconciliation and through this to bring faith, hope, and freedom into situations of prejudice and conflict. Virtue may be mediated from the external to the internal and out again.

### **Identity: Revealing and Reshaping or Constructing and Positioning?**

Aspects of the presented narratives indicate intentions to develop identity. For example, both Molly and Dave reweave their narrative identity with scriptures and the stories of YWAM Rostrevor. Dave declared his ‘identity in Christ is now first and foremost’ (DC2) and that his identity is as ‘a servant in the kingdom of God’. Many of their narratives involved God and others intentionally acting and speaking in that process of becoming. These intentions could be viewed as identity education defined as: ‘The deliberate active involvement of educators with the psychosocial processes and practices that are involved in students’ identity development’ (Schachter & Rich 2011:223). Identity has been used as a broad and diverse concept: ‘to refer to ethnic, religious, and other social entities; personality traits ... self-sameness, or personal meaning; stories told about the self; and specific social positions or roles performed in social interaction’ (Schachter & Rich 2011:223). Schachter and Rich define identity as:

the individual’s dynamic self-understandings and self-definitions used to structure, direct, give meaning to and present the self, that are negotiated intra- and interpersonally across the lifespan within sociocultural contexts, along with the psychosocial processes, meaning-systems, practices and structures that regulate their continued development (2011:223).

This definition sits well with MacIntyre’s ‘narrative order of a single human life’ (2007:187), but MacIntyre’s phrase is less ‘self’-referential. Identity is also referenced by the narratives others tell about us. Staff in the UofN DTS consistently reported ‘God’s view’ and God’s valuing as the real or true source of identity which is discovered through a relational process. Elise said:

Getting to know Jesus more, understanding who I am, and understanding who he has made me to be, and knowing that my security is in that, is in my identity in him, and is in who God is, instead of anything else that the world tries to tell me where my security is, that helps me to break out of those patterns (EE1).

Elise claimed her identity in Jesus is developed by a process of knowing Jesus more with increasing self-understanding of who God is and whom God has made her to be. This ‘security’ helps her ‘break out of those patterns’ formed by the ‘world’ telling her who she is and where her security lies.

Dorothy Holland argues that narratives and identities are constructed and reconstructed within the ‘figured worlds’ of existing characters and genre (Holland et al. 1998). Individuals ‘figure’ who they are in relation to sociocultural activities and the social types who make up those ‘figured worlds’ and in relationship with people (agents) acting in those worlds. Researchers must be familiar with the ‘figured worlds’ in their stories.

By “figured world,” then, we mean a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others. Each is a simplified world populated by a set of agents ... who engage in a limited range of meaningful acts or changes of states ... as moved by a specific set of forces (Holland et al., 1998, p. 52).

Vågan investigates how medical students navigate and develop their identities in different educational contexts. He argues that the situated learning view does not sufficiently allow for ambiguity and tension as medical students position and re-position themselves in their figured worlds. Moreover, identities in these figured worlds are mediated by cultural artefacts such as knowledge ‘in learning contexts, practices and identity formations’ (2011:45). From Holland’s ‘positional identities’ he seeks to use Wortham’s concepts to analyse the medical students’ means of discursive positioning. Wortham draws on Bakhtin and especially concepts such as contextualization cues, indexicality, and voice. One aspect of voice is the possibility of ‘ventriloquation’ raising the ‘Bakhtinian question “Who is doing the talking?”’ (Wertsch 1991:143).

Vågan notes how medical students use speech to distance themselves from their previous selves as first-year students and position and re-position themselves as characters in the storytelling event in a figured medical world with new knowledge and skills (Vågan 2011:55). There are similarities in that DTS students also distance

themselves in their narratives from their previous selves pre-DTS. There is evidence of positioning of themselves as characters, albeit in a figured world of scripture, such as Molly's reference to Peter walking on water, David's identification with Daniel's repentance, and Dave's identification with Jesus as a man of peace.

### **Narrative-as-Identity**

Sfard and Prusak (2005) articulate three types of identifying stories: 1) *first-person* identity in which the identified person tells her story to someone else, 2) *second-person* identity in which someone else tells the story to the identified person, and 3) *third-person* identity in which someone else tells a story about the identified person to a third party. Admittedly 'first-person self-told identities' do play a significant role in these cases, and Sfard and Prusak argue the merits of narrative-defined identity. This narrative definition brings human agency and identity's dynamic nature to the fore. The researcher can focus on discursive constructs (2005:17).

However, Wenger argues that identity is a 'way of being in the world', not 'a self-image', and not essentially 'discursive or reflective' (1998:151). Identity is socially defined because it is *both* reified discourse, (what we and others say about ourselves), *and* it is produced in lived experiences by participating in communities. These definitions pull in two different directions. If the world is a text and personal identity is a text to be interpreted, then we can limit our attention to a narrative-defined identity or as Juzwik calls it 'identity-as-story' and its discursive constructs (2006:17). Are we left with the stories we tell about ourselves and others tell about us as the only source of our identity? Indeed, Sfard and Prusak claim that identities as stories are 'human-made and not God-given' (2005:17). Sfard argues that participationists use human development to refer to 'what and how people are doing – in patterned human processes, both individual and collective' not to refer to transformations in individuals (2006:22). The unit of analysis is 'patterned human processes'.

Nevertheless, Lave and Wenger's social theory claims a view of learning 'as the historical production, transformation, and change of persons' (1991:51). The DTS CoP understands identity as 'God-given', something revealed in scripture and further revealed as God speaks. 'Every human shares part of that same identity that makes us all human. And I think we need to uncover that ... knowing that there is a human identity is imperative to missions' (23SS2). Identity is then reshaped and restored as the individual takes God's view to be the truth, and as the community calls them forward into their identity. Steve said,

I think that most people don't realize that God sees them individually ... It is first to realize that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, that they are unlike me and unlike someone else ... that needs a lot of paradigm challenging, but it is also focusing on God ... Identity is deeply important to DTS ... you can only give what you have. And in that identity, if you are believing that you are worthless ... that is a lie. You need to be freed from that. So, once you are freed from the idea that you are worthless, what do you want to do? ... You want to bring that freedom (23SS1).

Rather than identity as primarily a self-initiated construction, the participants understand identity as God-given and God-revealed with both a universal human identity and a unique identity. Practically recognizing a universal human identity by relationally valuing those who were previously 'other' – Irish Catholics and nationalists who 'killed my granddad' – appears to be a significant step towards goodness. Dave's declared identity as 'first and foremost in Christ', formed amid embodied practices and narratives, has led to an apparent moral change in the way he relates to those previously avoided as a potential threat. Dave and other participants' understandings were that identity is revealed, restored, and reshaped through listening to God and others, discerning true identity from false, and speaking and acting based on that true identity in a movement towards freedom. Participants understood that experiencing internal freedom from 'believing that you are worthless' – becoming aware and living in your true God-given identity – emerges externally in wanting to bring that freedom to others. Participants' understanding contrasts with sociocultural theorists view of identity as processes of self-construction and positioning, but the sociocultural lenses enabled these

processes to be observed. Participants desired to place great emphasis on the second person narrative ‘who God says I am’ seeking to reshape identity in light of that revelation. It could still be considered a socially defined identity, but one in which social relationship with God is expected to reveal true identity.

## **Conclusion**

In Chapters Six and Seven, the ‘narrative order of a single human life’ (MacIntyre 2007:187) is kept intact and coherent, albeit necessarily brief. Without personal narratives – set in the context of the shared historical narratives of the community and glimpses of the UofN DTS landscape of practices offered in previous chapters – it is difficult to consider possible motives or plausible explanations of virtue formation and learning and identity development. Dave’s case provided evidence of desires for and potential moral formation in virtues of courage, compassion, hope, peace, wisdom, and love.

The examples of ‘individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means (Wertsch 1991:18–19) usually became more varied and complex as participants engaged in activities associated with the DTS CoP over time. In Dave’s case, there was a demonstrated and admitted lack of fluency in cultural tools as Dave entered the CoP as an LPP. In the first interview, Dave was often at a loss for words. Many of the interview questions were causing him to think of things he had never thought of before. His tools to deal with social anxiety and internal anger were initially those of emotional suppression, distancing himself from others, and expressing his rage in private with vile language. However, by the second interview, Dave used more complex mediational tools with much greater fluency. He frequently dialogued with God, asking questions and making statements. He involved one-on-ones, a counsellor, other participants, and staff in the DTS in multiple examples of human mediation. The experience of identificational repentance and reconciliation using the tool of the prayer of Daniel in

the Bible was impactful. Dave began employing empathetic questioning and listening skills with his father, hearing about his granddad's murder through his father's experience. In David's preparation for the reconciliation event, we see tools of reading prayers from the Bible, fasting, and petitioning God. He also appropriated the authoritative teaching of a Benedictine monk and adjusted his view of the history of the Reformation. David's changes in understanding and mediated action indicate a potential growth in the virtue of compassion.

Not all participants continued to use tools such as 'hearing God's voice', and Simon became critical and sceptical of this and the tendency that it might be fake. There was an early recognition on the part of at least one staff member that it would be 'dangerous ... to try to force him to fake it' (26AR1). Nevertheless, Simon felt emotionally pressured to fit in. He wished he had been even more 'challenging and outspoken' to staff (1SM3). Simon should not necessarily be viewed as a disconfirming case. Simon may have grown in the virtue of discernment, and mediational tools sometimes appear and are appropriated again. The process of becoming is ongoing; it does seem to be affected by 'the company we keep, and what we do and say together' (Wells 2007).

In Dave's case, the group dynamic and emotional pressure, one-on-one mediation, and his responses to frustration led to experiencing breakthrough and, in his own, words freedom from chains. His new identity was expressed in sentences such as 'Jesus is a man of peace, and I am a man of peace because I have Jesus', statements he used to pursue peace. Dave viewed failures and mistakes as things to learn from and was seeking to bring others from a youth club into contact with DTS participants from other parts of the world, such as Syria. He was taking the initiative to use the tools he appropriated to afford opportunities for other young people from Belfast to be challenged in their prejudices and experience reconciliation. These diverse examples of



mediational means are afforded by the activities made meaningful in the sociocultural history of the community and locations, but also appropriated by the individuals as they seek to transform their world.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Reweaving the Arguments for Intentional Moral Formation in Virtuous Learning Communities**

#### **Introduction: Recalling and Reweaving the Arguments**

This chapter recalls the arguments developed in previous chapters reweaving them to provide concise answers to the research questions. The benefits of incorporating sociocultural understandings of mediational means and learning and identity development from Vygotsky and his followers into MacIntyre's philosophical virtue theory framework are reviewed. This hybrid framework requires resources of practical theology in the works of Dykstra and Bass to ground the empirical moral inquiry specifically in the Christian tradition. I present implications for moral formation and identity formation in DTS in light of the participants' understanding. Suggestions are made to maintain a healthy tension between intentional moral virtue formation in the DTS CoP and the freedom of human agency required for genuinely non-coercive rearrangements of desire through engagement, imagination, and alignment in Christian practices and their accompanying narratives. The original contributions of this moral inquiry to the existing literature are summarized. I discuss the limitations of the research in selecting and combining a unique set of research lenses, suggest further research possibilities, and finish with concluding remarks.

#### **Chapter One: Locating and Justifying the Research**

This research grew from an interest in DTS students' understanding of the interaction of their activities and narratives and its effect on moral formation. Prompted by MacIntyre's call to look for new kinds of 'institutional embodiment' such as St Benedict's monastic communities of 'prayer, learning and labor' (MacIntyre 2007:xvi), I saw how YWAM UofN and its globally dispersed learning communities could be viewed as an example. In Chapter One, the study was located within a relevant discourse on the relationship of higher education to ecclesiastical institutions and intentional moral formation. D'Costa and Higton's arguments led to recognizing the

need for empirical research on learning in higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian with an enlarged space for worship, prayer, and discipleship. Glanzer, Alleman and Ream's (2017) project to restore the soul and re-unify the fragmentation of the university through reimagination suggested the need for the 'liberating arts' in Christian community. Their work supports this thesis but perpetuates a gap by failing to give accounts of embodied practices and their associated narratives. James Smith (2009; 2013) further critiques the focus on ideas in approaching distinctively Christian higher education and offers a philosophical anthropology with education as a formative process of shaping human desires, social imagination, and identities through habits. These habits are embedded in thick communal practices, which can be exegeted as 'cultural liturgies', whether secular or religious.

A survey of more than 9,000 journal articles published from 1970 to 2010 in 26 North American Christian and interfaith journals demonstrates that little attention has been paid to pedagogical adaptations of specifically Christian practices in teaching and learning (Smith et al. 2014). Smith and Smith (2011) began to address the gap by presenting several university professors' creative experiments to introduce Christian practices into their pedagogical strategies in teaching university courses. However, the scholarly gap in showing how faith shapes the learning experience persists (Smith 2018). This study employs a similar theoretical framework to Smith and Smith (2011) but is significantly different in two regards. First, the focus is empirical research on participants' understandings of their embodied practices and narratives, not on teachers' understandings. Second, additional sociocultural theories arising from Vygotsky and Wertsch, deepen and extend the analysis in conversation with resources from MacIntyre, Lave and Wenger, and Dykstra and Bass. These differences offer an original contribution to knowledge that addresses a lack of empirical research on participants' understanding of their social practices and narratives regarding moral virtue formation

in learning in Christian higher education. The gap in the literature justifies the relevance and importance of the overarching research question: *How do participants (students, staff, and leaders) in the University of the Nations Discipleship Training School (UofN DTS) understand the interaction of their embodied practices and narratives, and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtue formation?*

## **Chapter Two: Creating a Hybrid Framework for Empirical Moral Inquiry**

Chapter Two employed resources to enable this moral inquiry by inserting sociocultural theories involving mediated action and the social formation of mind through social practices and narratives into MacIntyre's virtue theory framework. In addition to Lave and Wenger's situated learning theories, the research used Wertsch's individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-tools in episodes arising from Vygotsky's developmental theories with genetic analysis and human mediation in a ZPD as new tools for moral inquiry. Additional resources in practical theology promised a means to map contemporary activities and narratives in the DTS learning community onto ancient and continuing practices and to provide a *telos* in the Christian tradition. All these resources served to theoretically frame the approach for an empirical study and to ground MacIntyre's framework in a particular tradition.

MacIntyre's teleological framework conceptually establishes the role of practices and narratives in forming ethical agents in communities supported by institutions in a particular tradition. He justifies the form of tradition-constituted moral inquiry pursued in this study, as moral inquiry requires social embodiment in particular actions and utterances in a culture and language. Virtue formation is embedded in practice(s), and also in the narrative order of an individual human life, which is itself embedded in other social and historical narratives in a tradition. Practices, narratives, and traditions all have histories and future possibilities which can be made available to moral inquiry in the present. Virtues are necessarily embedded, therefore, in all three levels of the

practice(s), the narrative order of a human life, and in extending the tradition. Narrative, with its past, present, and future, becomes the ‘essential genre for the characterization of human actions’ (MacIntyre 2007:208). Narrative is the indispensable form for moral inquiry.

MacIntyre’s characterization of institutions, as necessary to support practices and communities multi-generationally but as concerned with distributing external goods, introduces a tension. That tension between the external goods pursued by institutions and the internal goods of a practice alerts us to a problem that some virtues and practices may be unlikely to flourish when educational institutions prioritise external goods. MacIntyre (2009) does not suggest how a university might support a religious community, nor does he offer alternative practices or methods to empirically investigate practices and communities which may enable virtues to develop. This thesis introduces sociocultural and activity theories into the virtue theory framework to address this lack.

Practice theorists can be summarized as conceiving ‘of practice as embodied, materially mediated arrays of human activity centrally organized around shared practical understanding’ (Schatzki 2001:11). As noted in Chapter Two, Vygotsky and his followers and their theoretical and methodological approaches are very rarely associated with theories of moral development or used for moral inquiry in relation to MacIntyre. Selectively joining these in moral inquiry allows the investigation of how and why people act in activity settings in a developmental process of becoming. The focus is not primarily on individuals learning virtues through cultural transmission, but how the CoP enables individuals to employ mediational signs and tools to seek to shape themselves and the world through processes of ‘*collaborative purposeful transformation*’ in pursuit of their goals (Stetsenko 2009:9, italics in original). In the learning community, available cultural tools are appropriated by students becoming part of their life purposes all within practices as they cooperate actively in zones of proximal

development. Critical theoretical knowledge can be introduced as tools through human mediation in the ZPD, leading to potential moral development. Teaching-learning or pedagogy becomes intertwined with development in the processes of becoming for the individuals and communities. MacIntyre's framework enables the moral dimensions to be central in this human quest of becoming.

Lave and Wenger's LPP keeps learning central. It provides a research lens to connect learning in a community of practice with identity trajectories as participants move from being novices on the periphery of the CoP. This identity formation can also be viewed through Wenger's three modes of belonging: engagement, imagination, and alignment, as participants develop shared repertoires.

Moral development becomes virtue formation in the Christian tradition as specifically Christian practices and narratives are joined in a community with a Christian *telos*. Resources in practical theology, such as works by Dykstra and Bass allow a grounding of MacIntyre's framework in a particular tradition, but also make further epistemological claims. Multiple Christian practices allow encounters with 'God's active presence in the world in Jesus Christ' (1999:63; Dykstra & Bass 2010a:204), and 'the educating work of God's Spirit among us and within us' (Dykstra 1999:78). Engagement in these practices can bring 'awareness of certain *realities*' (Dykstra 2003:172, italics in original), with emerging knowledge 'of God, of ourselves, and of the world' (Dykstra 2003:175). The participants in this study narrate both intrapersonal and interpersonal dialogue with God. These mediational tools, sometimes referred to as 'hearing God's voice', were attended to as phenomenological data and as potential sources of explanatory force in interpreting participant understanding. In the Christian tradition, all moral goodness is dependent upon God. Appropriating various mediational signs and tools may increase the freedom to receive grace and be led by the

Spirit in pursuing God's goodness in transformation towards flourishing in the person, the community, and the world.

### **Chapter Three: Qualitative Interpretive Inquiry with Individual Case Studies**

Chapter Three presented the research approach of qualitative interpretive inquiry and the stages and rationale for the research design, data gathering, and analysis. A multiple individual case study approach was used, in response to the demands of the research questions, to investigate participants' understanding of how moral formation is taking place in the UofN DTS. Therefore, the narratives of 33 participants with Type 1 expertise (student trainees reflecting on their everyday experience of the UofN DTS and their understanding of how it influences their lives) were privileged in both the design and analysis. Data gathering and data quality from Type 1 participants was enhanced by instituting Bronfenbrenner's PPCT model with a longitudinal design completing a series of three semi-structured interviews with 17 participants. Instead of methodological individualism, the sociocultural historical approach enabled the consideration of mind in activity in a mutually constituting institutional, social CoP in particular physical settings with a history.

Even though cultural and individual processes are mutually constituting and potentially inseparable, this challenge was overcome by accepting analytic separability using different levels of analysis in practice. Other data sources, such as archived UofN Reference Guides, UofN Catalogues and Workshop documents, and IDTSC curriculum and documents, were gathered. These were analysed to reflect on the reified historical objects produced by the UofN and IDTSC leaders as a basis for understanding what they think they are trying to do and a means to note consistencies or misalignments and gaps with DTS participants' understandings of what is taking place. The understanding of participants with Type 2 (UofN DTS leaders and staff) and Type 3 (UofN International Leaders) expertise was also gathered in semi-structured interviews and

used to develop and compare and contrast with the students' understandings. Repeated discussions on Christian formation with participants of Type 4 expertise (Masters Candidates and Christian Formation Educators) in a CoP proved a significant strategy of verification. All these conversations and readings gave a contextual understanding of moral formation in the broader Christian tradition and provided a means of testing analysis and theoretical, conceptual validity.

#### **Chapter Four: Situating the UofN**

Chapter Four situated the UofN amongst institutions of higher education that seek to be distinctively Christian. The UofN was presented as a 'story-formed institution' with a shared vision narratively expressed. The shared narratives employ templates involving prayer, hearing God's voice, joyful relinquishment of rights, and persevering obedience, along with a sense of adventure and pursuing the impossible with God to transform the world in partnership with God. Shared experiences in the DTS, a prerequisite for study in the UofN, and the relationships developed are a source of institutional unity. However, the risk of exaggerated communication in seeking to replicate charismatic experiences is also noted. A globally dispersed institution, the UofN is comprised of hundreds of missional communities with similarities to new monastic learning communities.

An example is given in the selected research site in Northern Ireland where intentions to serve the marginalized are intertwined with stories of Celtic saints and the place of An Cuan as a harbour. This skill of weaving stories of the institution with local and historical narratives in authentic ways may provide narrative material for the individual to reconstruct their own narrative enabling changes in identity and belonging. UofN commitments to reach the 'last, the least and the lost' may presently serve to counteract prioritising the external goods of academic reputation and wealth. However, the institutional pursuit of external goods is evident in the goal to influence every nation



and every sphere of society. Therefore, it is predicted that tensions with internal goods of certain Christian practices are likely to occur despite the UofN's alternative economy relying on unpaid volunteer staff and leaders.

### **Chapter Five: Connecting DTS Activities with Christian Practices**

Chapter Five addressed and answered the first and second research sub-questions. The first was: *How might DTS activities, which participants narrate as impactful, be related to Christian practices?* This question was answered by tracing various lines of connection between DTS activities and participant narratives with Christian practices and concepts. Resources in practical theology from Dykstra and Bass and Kallenberg and Murphy enabled the mapping and categorization of the multiple DTS activities indicated in the coding process onto Christian practices. Using Lave and Wenger's situated learning theories, DTS students were viewed as LPPs entering a CoP. Through Wenger's modes of belonging involving engagement, imagination, and alignment, we saw how participants negotiate meaning as they account for learning in the DTS activities. The DTS is not just a course, but a discipling community within a Christian missionary community. DTS activities, narrated as impactful, were connected to Christian practices using resources in practical theology, Wenger's modes of belonging in a CoP, and distinct planes of analysis to form a dialectical double perspective. The double perspective from the institutional view and the participants' views produced a dialectical way of presenting each of six practices. Offering increased and improved signs and tools for critical theoretical knowledge and narrative templates could enhance the learning in the CoP. Evidence that engagement in multiple Christian practices can carry epistemological weight in what participants understood to be emergent knowledge of God, self, others, and the world began to be observed in the narratives. DTS activities connected with Christian practices of worship, service, prayer, holiness through

discipleship, witness, and fellowship provided multiple settings for participants' understanding of the interaction of their embodied practices and narratives to emerge.

The second sub-question was: *How do DTS participants understand a good learning community?* This question was answered by producing a composite of frequent responses given by participants in their narratives obtained through coding.

## **Chapter Six: Participants Appropriating Mediational Tools**

Chapter Six presented Molly as the first major case with Clem as a minor case and foil to Molly, particularly in narrating the impact of and responses to the market episode in Burundi. The focus of the chapter was to answer the third research sub-question and to begin to answer the fourth. The third sub-question was: *How do participants appropriate mediational tools which may enable virtues to form?*

Participants do not appear to appropriate mediational tools for moral virtue formation in a universal, systematic or prescribed order, but some patterns were observed. Social activity settings with their accompanying narratives appear to be the location for the appropriation of mediational signs and tools. Opportunities to engage in a rich variety of activities with intertwining narratives result in participants picking up and inserting portions of the narratives into their own life story. Tools such as self-questioning, and others questioning can become increasingly fluent and co-mingled, but participants particularly developed tools of questioning and listening to God. These tools were used to question feelings and associated behaviours in the pursuit of moral change. The God-focus stood out in frequency as an axial coding theme. The dialogic form of prayer, the social interaction in the community, small group, one-on-one, and outreach all seem to be powerful in offering multiple opportunities for appropriation. The data in this thesis suggest the importance of the types of practices engaged in, the meaning attached through the narratives, the availability of human mediation in the community, and the desiring and imagining of the person in their quest towards the

good in the Christian tradition. Both participants and the institution understand that this process depends on God's grace. If God always plays a perfect role in virtue formation, difficulties must lie in the CoP, the individual participant, the broader sociocultural historical environment or some combination of these. Mediational signs and tools are selectively used in response to the shared repertoire available within the CoP. In a Vygotskian sense, virtues would be socially performed before they are internalized and formed. It appeared that as DTS participants act and speak in socially patterned ways, they are malleable in their desiring and imagining. As the CoP changes, the availability of specific signs and tools changes. It may become more difficult to not only appropriate but to maintain mediational tools that allow virtues to form. Human virtues may be somewhat less than a 'stable disposition', constantly requiring sustaining in interactive fellowship (doing and saying) with God and others.

### **Chapter Seven: Mediated Action, Learning Processes and Identity Trajectories**

Chapter Seven presents Dave as a major intense case with striking changes in his trajectory as an LPP moving towards fluency in the CoP. The account of an episode of identificational repentance is strengthened as Dave inhabits David's narrative, particularly evidenced through journaling. Simon is presented as a minor case where certain mediational means have been rejected six months after the DTS as he understands his use of them to have resulted from unhealthy, emotionally pressured conformity. Chapter Seven, like Chapter Six, provided data and analysis to answer both sub-questions three and four. The focus here will be on answering sub-question four: *How do participants' learning processes and identity trajectories interact and change through the DTS?*

Dave and other students use shared language as a tool to negotiate meaning in trajectories of learning. They reimagine self, others, and the world 'by transcending our time and space and creating new images' (Wenger 1998:176). One change is the extent

to which ‘hearing God’s voice’ and ‘knowing God’ ground a revelational basis for identity. Their identities, contrary to Sfard and Prusak’s theory of narrative identity as a purely human construction (2005:17), are believed by the participants to be God-formed and God revealed with both a universal human identity and a specific identity. Specific identity is understood to need reshaping towards God’s intention. The DTS CoP understands identity as revealed and reshaped through listening to God’s narratives, to others’ narratives, and by discerning true identity from false in a movement towards freedom.

Narratives and practices are tightly enmeshed, and much identity formation is unconscious, rather than consciously constructed in the CoP. By the end of DTS, Dave claims his ‘allegiance to Christ is first and foremost’, and this is accompanied by a distancing of his identification with Northern Irish, Protestant, Loyalist, and ‘ultra-conservative’ friendships. This has led to a moral change in the way he lovingly relates to those previously avoided as a potential threat to his identity. The participants understood that these changes in identity had been assisted by reading, learning, and identifying with scriptural narratives and specific verses. Dave appropriated the phrase ‘Jesus is a man of peace, and I am a man of peace because I have Jesus’ (16DC2) as a tool to reshape identity, address vices of anger and anxiety, and pursue the virtue of peace. These learned tools enable his transformation in identity from someone who has ‘mugged up’ his education and struggles with anger and social anxiety, to someone who considers university and a trajectory in criminal justice as possible. He desires to bring other youth who share his background into contact with international DTS students, such as a Syrian, to help them move towards reconciliation and peacemaking. The learning through episodes such as identificational repentance and reconciliation has moved from the external social plane to be transformed in the internal plane. Dave now plans to externalize that transformation back to help others change. Dave’s case

provided evidence of desires for virtues and potential moral formation in virtues of courage, compassion, hope, peace, wisdom, and love.

Learning processes and identity development often interact with a less dramatic change. Those who enter the CoP with more considerable experience and mastery of the signs and tools offered in the DTS may grow in the fluency of their use, and these may reinforce existing identity trajectories. However, exposure to those who are ‘other’, in the midst of the discipling community and the outreach, seems to affect identity formation. Nevertheless, that formation may be only temporary. Simon provides evidence of a participant who entered from a strong Christian family, with a great deal of theological fluency, practical experience in peacemaking and reconciliation, and a strong identity as a ‘suffering’ Palestinian. An episode of identity boundary brokering between American and Palestinian ways of relating seemed to occur in a ZPD in which he claimed revelation of God’s perspective of mercy and a desire to respond in the virtue of mercy rather than judging. Simon learned to appropriate tools of ‘hearing God’s voice’ and pray prophetic words over people and reported them as impactful at the end of his DTS. Six months after his DTS, he was sceptical and critical and believed these were often not true, and a result of unhealthy emotionally pressured conformity. From Simon’s account and other accounts, processes in learning and identity formation may necessarily need to be experienced and understood as ‘non-coercive’ to be truly virtuous. Discernment is needed because the participants’ understandings of human mediation in similar events can range from being helpful and supportive to being unhealthy emotional pressure.

### **Practising a Theory of Moral Virtue Formation in Higher Education**

This thesis has investigated participants’ understandings of the DTS activities as embodied Christian practices through their enacted narratives and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose, action in the world, and virtue formation. The inquiry focused

on the middle ground, the intermediate steps in the process of becoming. Individual case studies presented processes of change in desires and ways of relating to God, self, and others in the DTS CoP. This practice-based account offered an analysis of ‘individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means’ (Wertsch 1991:12) and the ‘social formation of mind’ in activity (Wertsch 1985). These mediational means involved human mediators and signs and tools afforded by the CoP. In the participants’ understandings, it also involved divine mediation, with God speaking, guiding and showing as a real, relational presence. Participants appropriated multiple signs and tools to pursue moral change in themselves from vices to virtues and to pursue goodness in their acting and speaking to reshape the world. Vygotsky’s ZPD drew attention to mediation in current processes of moral formation as DTS participants learned how to act and speak in the present, albeit drawing from historical and teleological narratives.

Rather than moral formation as a cultural transmission of rule-following behaviour, or as stages of development in cognitive moral reasoning, moral formation in higher education is viewed in this thesis as processes of meaning-making and rearrangements of desires while engaging in practices. Following theorists such as Hauerwas, this thesis acknowledges that some type of moral formation occurs through socialization in higher education, whether intended or not. Given the concern for higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian and its intentional aims towards moral virtue formation, institutions may want to investigate the role of Christian practices and narratives in communities. That investigation can be strengthened by researching from the perspective of students’ understandings of these embodied practices and narratives, rather than only from a faculty or institutional perspective. The sociocultural historical approach enables the investigation in the ‘process of becoming’, rather than measuring traits in the individual student’s mind, such as ‘attitudes’ in Likert scales. The thesis did not set out to prove that the DTS learning community is virtuous, nor that virtues, as

stable dispositions, resulted from engagement in the CoP. However, the case studies do provide evidence in participants' narratives of desires for and potential formation in moral virtues. Participants understood and narrated moral change in their lives. As participants engaged together in multiple Christian practices in the DTS community, evidence was found for moral learning and the emergence of knowledge about self, others, and God. Rather than merely acquiring skills, this learning is intertwined with identity formation as the interactions involve appropriation and reweaving of narrative threads and templates. In participants' understanding, the process of identity formation involves cooperating with God in revealing, restoring, and reshaping identity and is used to learn to become good persons.

### **How it Might be Working: Implications for Formation in DTS**

A process of 'leaving' involves a discontinuity and disruption of the existing habits and patterns of activities and social relations in everyday life. This dislocation affords an opportunity for 'leaving behind' and journeying towards new learning with new repertoires in a new CoP. The disruption also opens up portions of the replication of narrative patterns through which a human life is made meaningful. It might allow for the insertion of narrative patterns from other sources. In Molly's words, the combined activities of the DTS can 'completely crack open your worldview', and the untrue can get 'ripped away', while the true is confirmed and hardened (2MS1). This can be likened to a transcription process involving the rewriting of genetic information, or the retelling and adjusting of narratives to negotiate meaning guiding everyday life. This transcription can rewrite history and possible futures in ways in which the participant's story and narrated identity incorporate new fragments and templates. These are provided by the biblical narrative, the narrative of the history of God's people, and the narratives of YWAM (internationally, nationally or locally), as well as narratives gathered from

meaningful interactions in the new CoP. Kylie expresses this as part of her understanding of the learning community in DTS:

They are willing to let go of things that they believed, maybe about the world, about God, and about themselves. And they are willing to receive new things. A good learning community is people that seek God and seek God's counsel on things and seek God together. (12KD3)

This process is reinforced by an understanding that God speaks and reveals truth through words and mental pictures both through intrapersonal dialogue and interpersonal dialogue with God and others in prayer and everyday conversation. Learning from God is understood to be desirable and possible in a community that seeks God and God's counsel together. God's questions and God's words are woven into the narrative understandings.

The activities of the DTS provided embodied Christian practices to enable identification with Jesus and his 'servant heart'. Aaron concluded:

the activities that we do, especially on outreach and even here, are things that really try to resemble what Jesus would do ... we would go and love on the poor, and heal and try to pray for the sick ... and just go to hospitals and clean (10AP2).

The activities are 'what Jesus would do' but 'to really be like Jesus, our hearts need to be in the right places as well'. Aaron continued, 'the activities themselves and even on base praying for people, or praying for countries and helping out around the house and trying to be servants to each other ... help you practise what living like Jesus would be like' (10AP2). Aaron appeared to understand that the DTS activities not only help him practise but help him form a concept of that practice in relation to Jesus' practice. He claimed that it helps to change his behaviour as it helps to change his practices and the way Aaron narrates those practices to himself. Aaron narrated to himself what Jesus would be like and connects those to his actions in the activities. In Aaron's understanding, DTS activities were important in resembling what Jesus would do, but in and of themselves do not automatically lead to becoming like Jesus. A heart adjustment was required. He understood that whether or not it is done with a 'Jesus-like heart', a 'servant heart', was 'up to you' (10AP2). In Aaron's understanding, the DTS activities



allowed participants to practice ‘living like Jesus’. If done desiring a ‘Jesus-like heart’, participants could become ‘like Jesus’. In the Christian tradition, ‘living like Jesus’ – doing what Jesus would do with a ‘Jesus-like heart’ – could be closely connected to moral virtue formation as the *telos* of *the* highest good is bearing God’s image and becoming like Christ, ‘manifestations of God’s love’ (Hamalis & Papanikolaou 2013:276–77). Practising these lifeways and habits in the present – whether loving the poor, praying for the sick, interceding for nations, or cleaning in a hospital – could form moral virtues for the ultimate human *telos* of ruling as a royal priesthood in God’s kingdom (Wright 2010).

The DTS activities as Christian practices can be likened to sites of potential collaborative virtue expression and more broadly identity formation in the CoP. The moral meaning or genetic information brought via the transcription process of rewoven narrative fragments in templates can inform and guide the translation process of what is being done or produced in activity. If with Vygotsky, we consider that mind is being socially formed in activity, then we can see how virtues may be being formed even as they are socially performed in Christian practices and as social utterances and actions become internalized and then externalized again. The available narrative elements in templates are used by participants to guide their processes of moving from vices to virtues and their understanding of identity formation towards goodness.

Narrative fragments and templates provide new and enriched sources of sense-making not only of experiential histories but of futures. Teleological narratives and associated images draw persons in a trajectory towards a longed-for future. During outreach in deprived areas, Dave declared, ‘It’s not hopeless! ... there is hope for areas, hard-core areas like West Belfast and North Dublin and all of this Ireland. That was really good’ (16DC2). Dave’s teleological narrative of acting with hope drew from seeing patterns in the story of the call of Abraham and the nations, Jesus’ commands

such as the Great Commission and parables in Matthew, the image of God's kingdom as a tree that never dies, and through discussions about end times with a mentor. Dave claimed movement from a 'fatalistic mindset' to one of action in building 'God's kingdom' (16DC2).

Unless these processes of narrative insertion and reweaving are embedded in practices which cause them to be experienced and understood as real, or true, the narrative construction of identity begins to unravel or fails to occur. The formation of a new DTS CoP with the variety and intensity of the practices offered and engaged in, resulting in a shared repertoire, can open new understanding and reorder desires. Aaron stressed the significance of 'learning in the same direction' meaning a shared purpose of everyone wanting to know God more and at the end of his DTS remarked:

Learning about God in this environment is amazing because everyone is striving for God. They want a deeper relationship with God. So, when you, yourself, are learning how to have a deeper relationship with God, it is a perfect environment for that process, because everyone wants it (10AP2).

Aaron's understanding is that a community's shared desire for 'deeper relationship with God' provides 'a perfect environment for that process'. Most of life is not lived immersed in one CoP, such as the DTS. Leaving DTS and returning home or entering a different, or multiple CoPs leads to changes in the social relationships and the practices and narratives, and new negotiations of meaning and identity. These changes can lead to a questioning of and loss of narrative fragments and templates over time as they are no longer supplied and reinforced as true or real. That process of loss can be more sudden if the period of the DTS is considered to be 'not the real world' and connections fail to be made between the experiences of DTS while moving forward towards the next situation. Even though DTS may be seen as 'a great experience', six months in a CoP does not necessarily result in persevering engagement and alignment with Christian practices and their associated narratives.

Like many people and especially young people, DTS students entering the new CoP ask questions about the meaning of their lives, questions such as: Who am I? Where do I come from? Where am I going? What should be done? The data in this study might support the belief that these questions cannot be answered as an isolated individual. They appear to require a community, and if the journey is towards goodness, a virtuous learning community. In my view, such a community would maintain a healthy tension between intentional moral virtue formation in higher education and the freedom of human agency required for genuinely non-coercive rearrangements of desire. DTS participants understand that they learn by interaction with God and others how to live a good life. Attention to the availability of human mediation and the cultural signs and tools to negotiate meaning, especially between the boundaries of different CoPs and encounters with those who are ‘other’, appears important for research on learning, identity, and moral formation.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

This thesis makes seven original contributions to knowledge. First, it addressed a recognized gap in the literature by providing accounts of participants’ understandings of social practices and narratives taking place in higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian. Second, it contributed a new hybrid theoretical framework to inform methodology by inserting Vygotsky’s theories of genetic analysis and mediation in a ZPD and Wertsch’s unit of analysis of ‘individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means’ to deepen and extend MacIntyre’s philosophical framework. Connecting this new hybrid with Lave and Wenger’s social learning theories and resources in practical theology from Dykstra and Bass that already draw upon MacIntyre enabled a new research approach for an empirical moral inquiry in the Christian tradition. Third, by presenting YWAM UofN as an institutional example of higher education seeking to be distinctively Christian, we learned more about its unusual educational practices and

narratives with resonances with new monasticism. Fourth, we discovered how the UofN DTS activities could be mapped onto Christian practices and investigated them using different planes of analysis in a double dialectical perspective from both the institutional and the participants' perspectives. This method of mapping and double dialectical perspective could be used to analyse activities and their relationship to practices in a tradition. Fifth, through coding analysis, a new composite summary of DTS participants' understanding of a good learning community was created that could inform attempts to cultivate virtuous learning communities. Sixth, the multiple individual case study narrative accounts give voice to the students' understanding and experience of Christian practices in the learning community, not the teachers' understanding. Finally drawing all this together, tentative implications for how moral formation and identity formation may be working are inferred, informed by the understandings of UofN DTS participants.

### **Limitations of Case Study and Research Lenses and Further Research**

Narratives reduce the complexities of life to a told story. They may be deeply embedded in and intertwined with practices, the utterances may themselves be a class of deeds, but by presenting narratives in writing there is a necessary reduction and condensing of life. Even the most transparent and open account intentionally selects certain details to create a narrative unity leaving out other details. Although this research sought to set individual human action using cultural tools in the sociocultural historical context, it did not encompass the individual's whole life. Data regarding life pre-DTS and life post-DTS was gathered almost exclusively through the first-person narrative lens. Life during DTS did, where possible, include third-person narratives and multiple perspectives on the same episodes. One potential danger is narrative fallacy in which data is simplified, overinterpreted, and displayed through compact stories. I sought to overcome this through rigorous analysis, coding, and verifying understanding with

multiple readers and conversation partners with Type 4 expertise. While arguing that narrative is the essential genre for moral inquiry, there are significant limitations in relying on qualitative interpretive inquiry in case studies. For example, selection bias might result in over or under-emphasis on relational links or causal factors. Selecting multiple cases from one DTS could mean a weak understanding of the phenomenon in the broader population, and any statistical significance is unknown (Flyvbjerg 2013:198). The strengths the case studies afford are depth and richness of detail in understanding contexts and processes.

For breadth in understanding how a phenomenon correlates with other phenomena, how widespread it is, and variations across populations, statistical studies are needed (Flyvbjerg 2013:195–99). It was not possible to do both case studies and statistical studies given the existing research literature and the decisions taken about where to focus time and resources within this PhD thesis. A possibility for future research would be a three-stage online survey of DTS students at the point of acceptance, at the end of DTS, and six months to one year later measuring impact. This could provide statistical evidence across the whole DTS population in any given year and between different DTSs. This research only investigated DTS experiences, not the student experiences of the many academic courses in the UofN. This gives a limited perspective of the UofN and indicates an opportunity for future research into students' understanding of their embodied practices and narratives in academic disciplines after DTS.

Within the case studies, records and analysis of spending habits could yield important data on a virtue such as generosity. Does DTS affect spending habits or financial stewardship? Records of media usage, including how participants communicate and present themselves in social media, would provide other data for analysis. Rather than privileging evidence in interviews, statistical data on media usage

could shed light on moral formation with a different lens. For example, an experimental design of introducing new tools for social media production rather than consumption could be tested on DTS participants with before and after results testing for statistical significance. These questions await further research.

Leaving case studies open allows readers to bring their own interpretive expertise and perspective to the text. Rather than a neat summing up and summarizing of a rich complex case study, it is presented with its many-faceted diversity, similar to life itself. Diverse readers will be attracted or possibly repelled by different aspects of the case (Flyvbjerg 2013:193). Yin urges lessons learnt from cases, rather than statistical generalization, can afford analytic generalization as the case is used to interact with theoretical concepts (2013:325–27; 2014:40–41). But he also emphasizes that ‘the strongest empirical foundation for these generalizations derives from the close-up, in-depth study of a specific case in its real-world context’, which means few cases can be studied (Yin 2013:327). Flyvbjerg suggests, ‘Often it is not desirable to summarize and generalize case studies’ (2013:195). Case studies can contribute to cumulative knowledge. A limitation was that I did not find published case studies of students’ understanding of the impact of their embodied practices and narratives and its effect on their pursuit of moral purpose whether in higher education that seeks to be distinctively Christian or other higher education. I would very much like to see future research replicating a similar case study design. I often wished I had the time and resources to do a similar study in different institutional settings.

As noted previously, this thesis did not set out to prove that virtues, as stable dispositions, resulted from engagement in the DTS. It did seek to investigate changes in participants’ narratives and practices over time in a longitudinal study. This strengthened the research design by not relying on one-shot post-experience interviews. One limitation was the time period of one year. Humans appear to be quite malleable

creatures and can often adapt themselves to new social environments. Forming stable virtues may take much longer than one year and require ongoing support. Stating an intended moral purpose to ‘do something good for the world’ after DTS or six months later did not necessarily mean that it was actioned in the world. Nonetheless, I kept in touch with many participants and observed that their life trajectories had moved in the direction of their moral purpose. Virtues are demonstrated in the whole of a human life, which is the ‘unity of a narrative embodied in a single life ... the unity of a narrative quest’ (MacIntyre 2007:218–19). Displaying those outcomes, as epilogues, is not the aim of this study. Future research might involve interviewing DTS alumni in later stages of life asking them to reflect on their understanding of the impact, if any, from their DTS.

Another limitation of this research is that most of life is lived in multiple CoPs or ‘experienced by the developing person’ as ‘a pattern of activities, social roles, and interpersonal relations’ in multiple settings such as school, family, workplace, and peer groups (Bronfenbrenner 1994:39). Although I asked a few questions about settings other than the DTS, I had no access to observe them or the processes taking place. During the DTS, most participants live immersed in the DTS CoP. Of course, some communication is maintained with family and peers elsewhere, but this period of time is unusual in being lived primarily in one CoP. Acting and speaking in an authentic, faithful way with integrity across multiple settings with their different activities, social interactions, and role expectations is challenging. These are reasons to be cautious in claiming outcomes of moral virtue formation across all of life.

Selecting sociocultural theory and virtue theory as a hybrid theoretical frame meant that critical theory frames, such as post-colonial or feminist theories, were not used. I did not probe into how differences in gender, culture, ethnicity, or socioeconomic class affect the appropriation of mediational tools, nor how these affect

the UofN DTS power dynamics. This is a limitation of this research, as individual variations were investigated with little consideration of how differing cultural group identities might be influencing interactions.

Focusing analysis on mediated action enabled an inquiry into how participants employed cultural signs and tools in social and individual processes. The irreducible tension of individual(s)-acting-with-mediational-means, which defines mediated action is distinct from analysis that focuses on individuals or tools in methodological isolation. Drawing on Vygotsky, microgenetic analysis, ontogenetic analysis, and sociocultural historical analysis were all lenses used to investigate learning and identity formation as LPPs in a CoP. The ‘social formation of mind’ (Wertsch 1985) in activity enabled consideration of moral virtue formation not as individual psychological traits, but as transformative movements from the external to the internal and out again through actions and utterances. There are, nevertheless, limitations with selecting human mediated action as the unit of analysis. As noted previously, the sheer number and variety, if ‘all human action is mediated action’, does not lend itself to classification (Wertsch 1998:25). Wertsch’s ten properties of mediated action provide tools for analysis, but properties such as ‘all mediated action and activity being directed towards multiple and simultaneous goals’ make these very slippery fish to catch when analysing moral intentions, let alone formation. MacIntyre’s philosophical framework of virtues embedded in practices, the narrative order of an individual life, and a tradition has proven essential for moral inquiry. Despite the limitation of unlimited mediated action, I still see great value in paying attention to the availability and quality of human mediation and of cultural signs and tools in practices in a learning community. By integrating this in a tradition, the Christian tradition, and in communities with their distinctive Christian practices and narratives, we have seen how moral formation might be taking place.



## **Concluding Remarks**

The UofN educational practices and narratives in the DTS learning communities provided a rich and unusual institutional setting for this research. In August 2019, YWAM was preparing to gather and celebrate 50 years of training in Lausanne, Switzerland. The UofN called for 21 days of prayer and fasting, a time of humbling and focused intercession, and sent out a daily prayer guide in multiple languages. The three primary purposes were: 1) ‘personal consecration and preparation of our hearts’, 2) ‘setting aside of new leaders’, and 3) ‘revelation and breakthrough’ (UofN 2019a:2). Rather than philosophical theology as a source of unity in higher education, the prayer guide suggests that the practice of ‘intercession unites us – as we think God’s thoughts, share His heart, pray His prayers. We create with God through intercession. Intercession is linked to our learning. It is a place of integrating mind, heart, soul and spirit’ (UofN 2019a:4). This suggests a UofN understanding that intercessory prayer reunites and integrates the fragmented university. One of the prayers is for the revelation of God’s heart ‘for those currently shut out of education because of barriers of geography, of violence, prejudice, or economics’ (UofN 2019a:8). Through the DTS, the UofN desires to invite many others, including oral learners, to find ‘their place in God’s story’ entering ‘effective service, not only in the church and mission sphere, but into every sphere of society’ (UofN 2019a:17). The UofN is an example of MacIntyre’s call for an ‘institutional embodiment’ similar to ‘the monastery of prayer, learning and labor’, one which seeks to engage in societal renewal (2007:xvi). As DTSs multiply and diversify to ‘disciple all nations’ participants are urged to remember Dr Howard Malmstadt’s words: ‘We must be alert to His voice and obey His directions. Every class, every hour, every moment should be open to teaching from the Holy Spirit’ (UofN 2019a:17). Several DTS participants evidenced this attitude and understanding.

True identity is always particular. It is rooted in a story and practices which are part of a tradition. This research investigated participants' understanding in the Christian tradition, in higher education emerging from the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. Rather than seeking to escape the 'embarrassment of particularity' of a tradition (Roth 2011:71), perhaps resources for renewed moral virtue formation in late modernity may be found in those willing to be 'other' and love those who are 'other'. How we live, our daily actions and speech, forms and shapes what we believe. Even though there are limitations in what this thesis can demonstrate, a learning community that re-orientates practices and narratives towards worship, prayer, and service appears to enable a reordering of desires and imagination in the understanding of DTS participants. By God's grace, if participants are willing, this may enable a transformation of hearts towards a 'Jesus-like heart' (10AP2) and a shared journey towards goodness in addressing the needs of the world.

I trust that the theoretical framework developed in this thesis could be adapted and employed to investigate and potentially enrich moral formation in education in other cultures. It may be particularly adaptable to studies in moral virtue formation within educational institutions emerging worldwide from the Pentecostal/Charismatic movement. By adjusting the practical theology resources, other traditions could also employ the framework for moral inquiry. I look forward to continuing empirical research in moral virtue formation in education.



## ANNEXES

### Annex One: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

#### Background Questions

Name

Can you tell me where you are from and how old you are?

Country

Nationality

Year of Birth and Age

Do you speak any other languages?

Can you tell me a little about your church background, if any?

Can you tell me a little about your family?

What influenced you to come to the DTS?

**This bank of DTS participant interview questions was used but varied in order.**

What were some of your expectations of DTS?

What kind of person would you like to become?

What kinds of things do you think shape or form a person's character?

If you think over the last six-month period of time, is there anything you can tell me about that led to change in your life or impacted you?

What activities are you doing in the DTS that are impacting you?

Can you describe how you participated in that activity?

Could you tell me about something you have learnt from others on this DTS?

What connection (if any) do you see between the activity or activities and scripture?

If you could gather a group of people to do something good for the world, what would you do?

Who do you want to be six months from now?

If you were to finish the sentence, [Interviewee name] is ..., how would you finish it?

What qualities do you value in a person?

Who do you see as a good example in the community here?

How would you describe goodness? Goodness is ...

How would you describe a good person? A good person is ...

How would you describe a good community? A good community is ...

How would you describe a good learning community?

If you were to tell me about one or two vices that you are seeking to overcome, what would you tell me about?

What do you understand to be the steps or process of changing from those vices?

If you were to think about your desires or what you want or love, how have those desires possibly changed or been reordered during DTS?

Is there anything else you want to say or tell me? About DTS or about yourself?

## Annex Two: Codebook

### Coding Nodes

Name	Description	Files	References
Adjusting Post-DTS	narratives referring to process of adjusting to life after DTS	14	24
Community	a group of people that care about each other feel that they belong together and have some sense of shared attitudes, values or purpose	78	411
Accepting People	process of including and welcoming people, recognizing their differences in background, gifting, maturity and calling and not judging or rejecting them for those differences	22	38
Being Vulnerable	being open and emotionally transparent, open to uncertainty and risk, especially in relationships, not referring to vulnerability due to harmful circumstances beyond the person's control	37	69
Believing in People	process of seeing potential and goodness in a person or in a group of people and valuing and trusting them	14	19
Building Relationships	process of forming deeper relational knowledge and forming relationships	39	69
Discipling supportive community	a community of people encouraging, challenging, and helping one another to follow Jesus	29	39
Friends	expressions or references to friends or friendship	25	44
Immersive	being completely surrounded by and involved in something	7	9
Living in Community	expressions of living together and shared life in Christian community	37	62
New Monastic Learning Community	responses to the use of the phrase in describing YWAM/UofN community	5	15
Safe	an environment and relationships in which people feel free to communicate honestly and vulnerably and be less guarded, not references to freedom from violence or physical safety	21	30
Shared Purpose	having a common goal or object between people	2	2
With-ness	doing 'life together' in discipleship, not withdrawing but being present	8	12

Name	Description	Files	References
Cross-cultural experience	living and working with people from different countries and cultures, being exposed to different shared values, goals and practices, beliefs and attitudes	23	36
Danger of Indoctrination	discussions of the risks of people in a close community thinking alike, or being brainwashed	4	11
Desires	expressions of wanting or needing	47	100
Earthly vs Spiritual	narratives which contrast earthly or material vs spiritual or secular vs sacred	7	8
Emotions	narrative expressing, recalling or describing emotions or feelings	17	82
Forming Character	responses to what kinds of things shape or form a person's character	27	56
Freedom	expressions using the word 'free' or 'freedom'	37	93
God Focus	references to God	85	875
Father God	references to Father or Father God, First person of the Trinity referred to as Father by Jesus, but not the teaching title 'the Father Heart of God'	18	40
God Guiding	attributing experiences as God's prompting, leading or directing of choices regarding the future or decision making	34	75
God's Kingdom	references to God's kingdom (his rule or reign) and not those simply using the name 'Kingdom DTS'	20	41
Hearing God's Voice	variations on the use of this phrase or references to God communicating in various ways	52	156
Holy Spirit	references to the Holy Spirit or Spirit, referring to the third person of the Trinity, not the use of spiritual or spirit in a non-specific or non-personal way, or an evil spirit.	31	59
Jesus	references to Jesus or Jesus Christ, not using the term as a swear word or in a derogatory fashion.	67	178
Sensing God	experiences of sensing or feeling God's presence	19	28
Goodness	answers to questions about goodness in general	70	440
Good Community	answers to questions about what is a good community	67	90

Name	Description	Files	References
Good Example	answers to questions asking if there is someone in the YWAM community they have seen as a good example	33	60
Good for the World	answers to ‘If you could gather a group of people and do something good for the world, what would you do?’	51	74
Good Learning Community	answers to questions about what makes a good learning community	29	38
Good Neighbourhood	answers to what makes a good community or neighbourhood in the broader sense, not limited to a Christian community	13	26
Good Person	answers to questions about qualities you value in a person, or how would you describe a good person, or a good person is ...	65	130
Greater Purpose	expressions of pursuing a bigger purpose in life	10	13
Guidance	expressions of seeking or needing direction	17	24
Identity	self-narrated or other narrated expressions of identity or the revealing or forming of identity	72	333
Becoming Self Aware	process of becoming aware of one’s own strengths, weaknesses, emotions, internal thoughts, and interaction with others and the world	38	78
Inhabiting Narratives	references to others in their own narrative, or references to themselves in other’s narratives	29	70
John Is	responses to ‘If you were to finish the sentence [Interviewee’s Name] is, today. What would you say?’	31	39
Positioning before DTS	expressions locating and describing themselves before and after DTS	13	14
Shared Humanity	having in common being human and connecting with others who may be different	8	9
Wanting to Become	responses to who do you want to be in the future or who do you want to become	27	61
Journey	uses of the metaphor of journey	25	37
Mediational Means	examples of mediating by peers or staff, suggesting tools and signs potentially in a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)	64	332



Name	Description	Files	References
Artefact	artefacts (tools and signs) are imbued with meaning as they are produced and used in a field of 'aim-oriented' human activity.	4	6
Challenging to go deeper	process of questioning or being questioned or urged to think or reflect more deeply	12	25
Interpersonal Communication	conversations and other forms of communication between two or more people	28	69
Intrapersonal Dialogue	conversations that take place within the individual	48	138
God Talk	reported conversation that was internal to the individual and involved God	41	93
Self Talk	reported talk that was internal to the individual and did not involve another person	22	45
Learning from Others	examples of learning from others	10	15
Learning to Lead Worship	describes a process of participation, observation and increased responsibility for leading worship with feedback and support from an experienced community member	5	6
Mirroring	asking questions and reflecting back in a way that helps persons see themselves, their attitudes, thoughts or behaviours as others might see them, not imitating body language or mirroring as in psychology	2	4
New Language	new ways of speaking as a result of entering a new community	5	8
Participating in Change	joining with others in planning, creating or adjusting for the purpose of making changes	2	3
Seeing Different Views	being exposed to or open to seeing from different viewpoints, open-minded	18	28
Struggling to Articulate	finding it difficult to express in words or have the language for explaining	4	10
Narrative Summaries	summaries of each interview	70	70
Practices	an activity or cluster of activities, socio-culturally mediated using words and tools, which DTS participants engage together in over time. In YWAM/UofN the institutional object of these multiple practices is to learn to follow Jesus Christ together 'to know God and make God known' in the world.	92	1419
Discernment	distinguishing God's activity and will in the world usually through a process of prayer, scripture, open discussion, and consensus	71	275

Name	Description	Files	References
Bible Engagement	reading, hearing, studying, memorizing, discussing, reflecting on the Christian scriptures, both Old and New Testament	38	73
Connecting with Scripture	responses to questions about connecting with scripture or unsolicited connections made with scripture in narratives	46	84
Journaling	writing and creatively expressing in a book in response to questions. Journals in DTS are usually read by the one-on-one and may be a topic of discussion in a one-on-one conversation	15	23
Seeking G	refers to a practice of the DTS gathering to ask God a question usually led by a staff or student, having a period of silence, individuals sharing back, recording on a white board and then someone summarizing	9	21
Teaching	presentations, usually by a lecturer or teacher, on DTS; it can also refer to a specific topic, such as the teaching on the Father Heart of God.	34	64
Devotions	short biblical teaching or reflection presented by a staff or student to a DTS group, usually 15 to 30 minutes in length	4	5
Discipleship	following Jesus, putting his teaching into practice and helping others to do the same	80	376
Accountability	holding people to do what they have said or committed to, or giving a report on what they have thought, said or done	12	21
Application	seeking to put truth or teaching into practice e.g. writing a letter asking forgiveness or going to someone to confess or ask forgiveness or encourage, or responding in a ministry time to teaching, often in praying or receiving prayer	15	28
Confession Forgiveness Reconciliation	a cluster of activities involving confessing, forgiving, resolving conflict, peacemaking and reconciliation	46	125
Confession	acknowledging personal or corporate sin or weakness to others	8	8
Conflict Resolution	dealing with conflict in a group or between persons seeking to resolve it, or bring out the disagreements and agree to disagree, with ongoing peaceful relationships	17	31

Name	Description	Files	References
Forgiveness	A decision to not hold something against a person for what they have said or done, or not said or done, and a process of letting go of feelings, such as anger, hurt or resentment towards the person	23	34
Peacemaking	directly addressing issues of conflict with truth, justice and the desire for restored right and harmonious relationships	6	8
Reconciliation	the process of being restored to unity in right relationship	21	43
One-on-One	regular informal meeting (intended to be weekly) between a student and staff for feedback, assessment and evaluation. It can also refer to the person, either student or staff, as in 'I met with my one-on-one'.	27	49
Small Group	meeting together in a consistent group of between four and ten people, one to three times per week, to know one another, to discuss teaching, understand and apply it, and to pray for one another, often involving a drink and/or food	12	17
Speaking and Listening		56	129
Confronting	speaking to another person to address something that is difficult or a problem, or appears to be wrong	21	34
Encouraging	speaking words of hope, support, or affirmation or listening attentively to give confidence	25	41
Honouring	giving respect and recognizing the contribution and value of others	6	8
Listening	giving attention to and hearing a person in a way that deepens understanding and relational connection	25	38
Speaking in Truth	this phrase or similar ones refers to speaking truth in love to people and often includes specifically counteracting lies they believe about themselves or others	7	8
Submitting	yielding the will to God or others in authority	5	6
Prayer	conversation with God, either corporate or individual	81	283
Contemplative prayer soaking	sitting quietly in God's presence and listening or beholding, soaking involves sitting quietly while worship music is playing	10	18

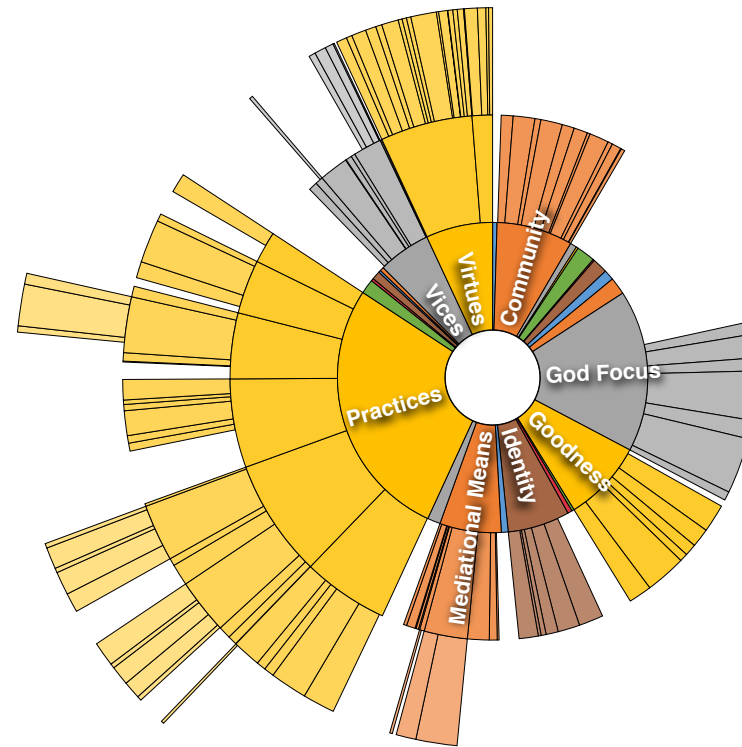
Name	Description	Files	References
Healing prayer	receiving or praying for healing or mending of brokenness or illness which could be physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological or social	9	17
Intercession	listening to God in light of the needs of the world and praying to God on behalf of other people	33	56
Liturgy	set prayers and readings performed together with others	11	14
Prayer Walking	walking and praying at the same time usually for the place or people where you are walking	7	10
Time Alone With God	refers to individual devotional time with God, it is also a designated 45-minute morning time slot in the DTS schedule	29	46
Service	using time and abilities to meet the needs of others in the community, to volunteer is to freely offer time and abilities in service	62	210
Footwashing	washing one another's feet following Jesus' example with his disciples in John 13	2	2
Giving and Receiving	any reference to money, finances, support fundraising, offerings, or giving and receiving	13	19
Hospitality	welcoming and preparing for guests and visitors who may be friends or strangers in practical, heartfelt and prayerful ways	46	126
Playing together	participating in games or activities for the purpose of recreation or enjoyment	7	11
Refugees	references to people who have fled their home country	31	73
Table Fellowship	sharing food and/or drink and talking over meals together	12	19
Working Together	refers to work duties a required activity on DTS or doing practical work together	17	24
Witness	proclaiming and/or demonstrating Jesus Christ, his authority and his kingdom to the world	60	172
Evangelism	having meaningful conversations about Jesus with those who are not committed Christians with the intention to see them trust and believe in Jesus, follow him and belong to his Church	17	37
Outreach	various ways of going out to share Christian faith, serve, or dialogue with others, often in cross-cultural settings in other nations, but sometimes local	41	98

Name	Description	Files	References
Testimony	talking about your life and your understanding of God's involvement in your life	14	17
Worship	expressions and acts of honour, love and devotion to God, or unspecified mentions of worship	43	101
Sung Worship	singing songs, hymns and spontaneous expressions to God or about God or about the need or desire for God	18	44
Room to risk	giving opportunity to try something out and possibly succeed or fail	6	14
Seeing Growth	seeing growth or change in others or oneself	28	46
Setting Expectations	process of setting and communicating expectations of people and the DTS	8	12
Us Vs Them	noting people as 'Other' in some way, not necessarily antagonistically	10	21
Vices	negative character traits or habit patterns, the opposite of virtues	75	285
Addiction	repeated involvement with an activity or substance use in spite of the harmful effects, usually because the involvement was or continues to be pleasurable	10	28
Anger	emotional patterns of annoyance, displeasure and hostility which may lead to acts and speech which damages the person and/or others.	13	25
Impatient	tending to be irritated or angered by perceived slowness or delays	6	8
Fear or Anxiety	emotional patterns caused by perceived threats of harm or danger, or patterns of worry or nervousness which may lead to avoiding speech and acts understood to be good for the person and/or others.	40	93
Jealousy	feelings of threat to a relationship because of a third person	2	2
Laziness	patterns of reluctance to make an effort in doing good work or in pursuing God's will, a desire for ease.	13	19
Lust	emotional patterns of intense desire and/or gratification, often sexual, for objects, images or persons considered to be dishonouring to God and his intention for relationship	10	13
Pride	patterns of excessive focus on oneself, false self-assessment and over reliance on one's own abilities, disregarding the need for God's grace and the help of others.	40	91

Name	Description	Files	References
Comparison	looking at the similarities and dissimilarities between others and yourself often accompanied by feeling better or worse than others	11	15
Judging	readily forming critical or harsh opinions about others or of ourselves	13	26
Selfish	self-focused, lacking consideration for others, primarily concerned for one's own benefit	12	19
Tearing others down	using words to belittle, dishonour or disregard others	3	3
Self-condemning	beating yourself up emotionally for doing or not doing something, or your perceived failure	3	4
Virtues	habitual patterns of thought, emotions, speech and acts towards the good, true, right and just in a person or group; character traits or dispositions emerging from and nourishing practices that enable us to pursue well a vision of human flourishing	76	361
Compassion	strong feelings of concern or sympathy for the suffering and misfortunes of others often leading to an action	15	24
Courage	overcoming fear or anxiety in order to do good when facing danger, pressure to do nothing or to do something wrong	10	13
Faith	the God-given ability to receive and confidently grow in trusting and knowing God through divine revelation	22	33
Gratitude	attitudes, expressions, and actions of thankfulness	18	24
Hope	the desire and confident expectation enabling us to see and pursue a better future	10	14
Humility	patterns of integrity, honest self-assessment of strengths and shortcomings, confidence in who we are that frees us from concern about being treated as less than others, exercising our gifts in ways that honour God and others rather than towards self-interest or self-promotion, not arrogant or prideful.	25	38
Joy	an emotion of happiness or rejoicing towards God and others that is considered a fruit of the Holy Spirit	9	9
Justice	acting rightly towards God and other human persons, there is a sense of proportional equity in giving them their due	8	10

Name	Description	Files	References
Kindness	patterns of words and deeds which are sensitive to and contribute to the needs of others	9	10
Love	patterns of acting selflessly for the good of others without seeking reward	32	58
Mercy	a willingness to help anyone, especially those who may be undeserving or need pardon or reconciliation	3	5
Patience or Fortitude	patterns of perseverance and trust, waiting for a greater good in the midst of adversity and daily life; having mental and emotional toughness to do what is right even in suffering.	17	20
Self-Control	patterns of self-restraint, resisting temptation and exercising moderation in appetites, desires, impulses and emotions; able to delay gratification in order to pursue a higher good	1	1
Self-denial	choosing to forego what you would prefer or want for the greater good of another or the group	10	11
Trustworthy	patterns of honesty, reliability, and faithfulness	8	10
Wisdom	exercising sound judgment and making good decisions, phronesis (practical wisdom), or prudence	12	14
Performance Character	skills and capacities that can be used for either good or bad ends, but enable us to enact character habits in expressed practice	34	65
Collaborative	readily works with others to get things done	1	2
Confidence	similar to self-efficacy, the belief that you can do a specific task, speak up or succeed in a specific situation	18	29
Imagination	the ability to mentally transcend our time and space and envision new connections and images of the world and our engagement with it	10	19
Initiative	proactive in addressing needs, problems or opportunities	6	6
Self-discipline	training yourself to do what needs to be done without giving in to feelings or desires that would lead you in another direction, similar to self-control but with more emphasis on training	8	9

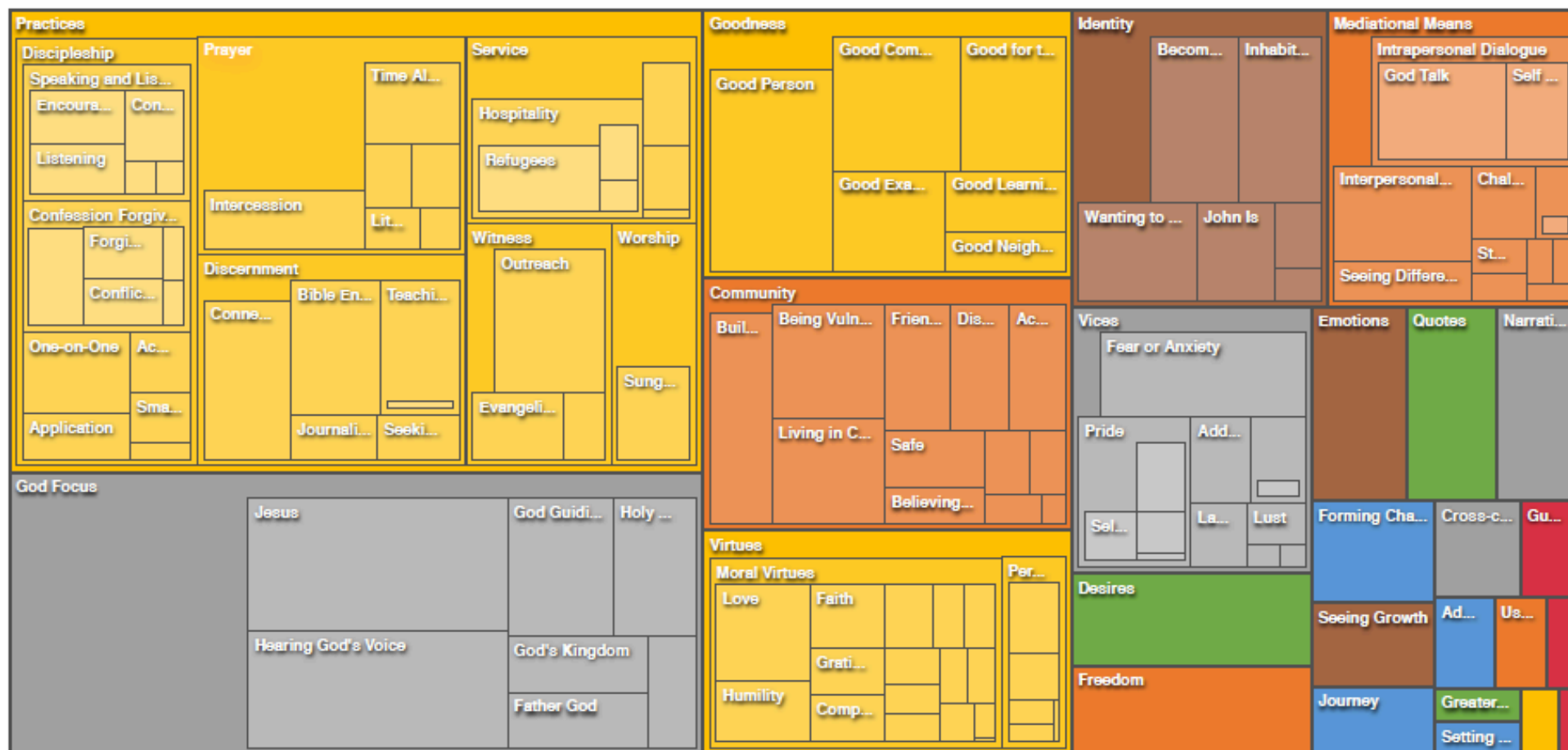
### Annex Three: Sunburst Coding Display







## Annex Four: Tree Map Coding Display









## **Annex Five: Research Participation Information Sheet**

John Peachey

1 March 2016



### **Research participant information sheet on how adults understand Christian formation and discipleship and connect practices with narrative in developing virtues in YWAM University of the Nations.**

#### **Who am I?**

I am registered as a student with the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) and Middlesex University working towards a PhD. My stage leader is Dr David Singh, [REDACTED]@ocms.ac.uk. I also have worked with YWAM since 1983.

#### **What is the research about?**

My research is looking at how participants: students, staff and leaders view Christian formation and discipleship. I am observing different practices in the Discipleship Training School (DTS), how these practices impact their character, and how they connect the practices with personal stories, scripture, and examples. I am looking at how 'goodness' is perceived and practiced.

#### **What information is being gathered?**

The information being collected is the perspectives and accounts of participants: students, staff and leaders regarding Christian formation and discipleship. I will use personal interviews or small focus groups and record these using audio. I will observe and take notes of discussions, context, process and content. Some interviews will be fully transcribed. Data collection may take place between 1 November 2015 and 31 October 2018. There may also be surveys collected.

#### **What about confidentiality?**

You have the option to have your own name associated with any comments that are used, or for it to be anonymous with another name used. The raw data will be kept securely. Other researchers may be given access as is customary, but they commit to maintaining confidentiality.

#### **Do I have to participate?**

No, your participation is completely voluntary. You can withdraw at any time.

#### **How will the results be used?**

This research is self-funded. It may be of academic interest in understanding Christian Formation and discipleship practices in education and for Youth With A Mission/University of the Nations in considering the impact of the DTS and how to improve it. It may also be used in preparing a PhD thesis and in academic papers and presentations.

Please get in touch if you would like further information:

John Peachey, +44 [REDACTED]; Email: [REDACTED]@ocms.ac.uk

**Thank you for considering participating!**



## Annex Six: Consent Form for Research

### Consent Form for Research on how adults understand Christian formation and discipleship and connect practices with narrative in developing virtues in YWAM University of the Nations

*Please tick the appropriate boxes*

Yes    No

#### **Taking Part**

I have read and understood the project information sheet dated 01/03/2016. ☐    ☐

I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project. ☐    ☐

I agree to take part in the project. Taking part in the project may include being interviewed and recorded (audio or video), or notes taken on discussions, context, process and content. ☐    ☐

I understand that my taking part is voluntary; I can withdraw from the study at any time and I do not have to give any reasons for why I no longer want to take part. ☐    ☐

#### **Use of the information I provide for this project only**

I understand my personal details such as phone number and address will not be revealed to people outside the project. ☐    ☐

I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs. ☐    ☐

*Please choose **one** of the following two options:*

I would like my real name used in the above ☐

I would **not** like my real name to be used in the above. ☐

#### **Use of the information I provide beyond this project**

I agree for the data I provide to be archived for research purposes. ☐    ☐

I understand that other genuine researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. ☐    ☐

I understand that other genuine researchers may use my words in publications, reports, web pages, and other research outputs, only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the information as requested in this form. ☐    ☐

#### **So we can use the information you provide legally**

I agree to assign the copyright I hold in any materials related to this project to John Peachey. ☐    ☐

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of participant [printed]      Signature      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
John Peachey  
Researcher      [printed]      Signature      Date

Project contact details for further information:

John Peachey, +44 [REDACTED], [REDACTED]@ocms.ac.uk

OCMS MPhil Leader: Dr David Singh, +44 [REDACTED], [REDACTED]@ocms.ac.uk

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## Annex Seven: Stages of Data Collection Timeline

This table support Chapter Three Data Gathering.

### **Four Stages of Data Collection**

	<b>Stage 1</b>	<b>Stage 2</b>	<b>Stage 3</b>	<b>Stage 4</b>
<b>Activity</b>	Interviewed 12 trainees (Type 1), 3 leaders and staff (Type 2), and 7 international leaders (Type 3) of the UofN DTS and conducted a Focus Group with 14 participants (Type 1)	Reviewed archived UofN Reference Guides, Catalogues and Workshop documents and International DTS Centre curriculum and documents	Conducted 27 in person first interviews of DTS participants at the beginning, 24 in person second interviews six months later at the end, and 19 audio/video online third interviews six months after the end of DTS	Visited 13 UofN DTS sites in 10 countries primarily in Europe, but also in East Africa and the Middle East (See Table) and repeatedly discussed data, analysis and interpretation with experts (Type 4)
<b>Purpose</b>	To gather data from participants in the UofN DTS on how they understand the practices and narratives in the DTS affect them and may lead to learning and change in their moral purpose, action in the world, and character. Type 1 interviews focused on experiences of interacting with refugees and those who were considered 'other'.	To reflect on the reified historical objects produced by the UofN and international DTS centre leaders as a basis for understanding what they think they are trying to do and a means to note consistencies or contradictions and gaps with DTS participants' understandings of what is actually taking place	To strengthen the Process/Person/Context/Time approach by interviewing at six monthly interviews at the beginning of DTS, end of DTS and six months after DTS allowing for longitudinal data to be gathered on how UofN DTS participants understand the activities and narratives in the DTS affect them and may lead to learning and change in their moral purpose, action in the world, and character	To become familiar with different DTS contexts during the period of research and consider the role of context and community in situating learning especially for Stage 3 data and to discuss findings with candidates and expert educators in the Masters in Christian Formation and Discipleship (Type 4) checking for internal and external validity
<b>Dates</b>	<b>February 2014-November 2016</b>	<b>August 2016-October 2017</b>	<b>October 2016-November 2017</b>	<b>February 2014-May 2019</b>



## **Annex Eight: Sample Interview**

The transcript of a sample interview is below.

170316\_008 mp3 10AP2 Transcript (Checked!) 25:43 Word Count: 4390

### **Interview Summary**

Aaron considers that DTS 'has really provided a group and a community and an environment where I can really work on different aspects of my life, different parts of my growth and really move forward in a healthy direction. Being disciplined in such a way that it is more like they are there with you, they are living life with you, and when they see something that is maybe not Kingdom values they kind of help you through it and ease you into what would be more like Kingdom values'. Aaron was very impacted by visiting the home of a widow who was a genocide survivor. She shared her story of how her neighbour killed her husband and children. In spite of that, the widow had 'totally forgiven the neighbour and had even tried to reconcile and find him'. Aaron experienced seeing 'deep faith in action' from someone who 'was living in nothing' and yet 'absolutely was so joyful'. He found this experience very inspiring and powerful.

One night they were praying for people, and Aaron recalls, 'I really felt that I was hearing God's voice, more than any other time.' He says, 'I would hear something, and I would say it, and it was like spot on the word.'

Another experience was playing his ukulele on his own and singing 'Break every chain'. A couple of people joined him and then a few more, and he played the same song more than an hour. Aaron says, 'We were getting super deep in prayer and worship with it, and during it I really felt God saying I can be a worship leader'. Although Aaron had played in worship bands before, he had never led worship. So, he 'went and talked to Steve and Allan and they signed me up to lead base worship', which he did several times, as well as Monday night Harbour meetings and worship times on outreach.

Aaron thinks that the activities they do 'resemble what Jesus would do ... on outreach we would go and love on the poor, and heal and try to pray for the sick, and pray for them and just go to hospitals and clean'. The activity is 'what Jesus would do' but 'to really be like Jesus, our hearts need to be in the right places as well'. Aaron continues, 'the activities themselves and even on base praying for people, or praying for countries and helping out around the house and trying to be servants to each other ... help you practice what living like Jesus would be like'.

In doing something good for the world, Aaron accepts 'that I can't change the entire world. He does think, however, that we can 'change people's worlds'. He says, 'We have a capacity to change that person's reality and help bring about new life in them with God in us'. He gives the example of an orphanage he visited where six or so children live in family groups, each with a father and mother. Aaron would like to do something like that, and he was inspired by one of his best friends on outreach who had come from a similar home and had been an orphan himself.

Finishing the sentence Aaron is, he says 'passionate'. Reflecting further, he chooses the word 'intense' and explains that when he commits to something, he holds nothing back but does it to the best of his ability. Aaron values honesty, steadfastness, trustworthiness, courage and being loving in a person. When asked about goodness, Aaron replies, 'Goodness is godliness.' 'A good person is someone who is, knows they are a sinner, but is striving every day to become more like Jesus.'

A good community has very open, vulnerable people who are real and not fake. They are open and honest about their struggles which 'deepens community'.

Aaron continues to struggle with insignificance, or comparison as a vice. He is walking out of it by 'continually going back to God and asking him how he sees me and how, who I was made to be'. His desires have changed in wanting people to come together. Where he grew up, he says there was a 'them and us mentality' with the Native Americans in his community, and he didn't realize how big and how wrong that was. He is also learning to love people that he might not like that much. He has been learning to deepen friendships and have 'deeper love for each other by being more open and real'. He reflects that 'before DTS I wasn't very open with who I am, who I was' and never realized 'how much that affected relationships' with friends and family.

Aaron came to DTS wanting to be 'more open about my past' and had 'been praying to have courage' and 'be more vulnerable'. When it came time to share testimonies in the first week Aaron went first and 'word vomited' his 'really big things ... all the bad stuff ... also the good stuff' and then feeling 'ready to go home if people weren't going to accept it'. Instead after the testimonies all of his roommates came around and said, 'We just met you, but we love you, and we're here for you.' Steve also came and met with Aaron and said, 'We are here to help you and get you through this.' That experience was very impactful for Aaron. Being open, honest and vulnerable are qualities that Aaron desires in himself and others.

After further training in Montana, Aaron hopes to return to work in Burundi.

John.

Ok, thanks Aaron for agreeing to be interviewed again.

Aaron.

Not a problem.

John.

How has DTS met or not met your expectations?

Aaron.

I think it has definitely met my expectations in the sense that it has really provided a group and a community and an environment where I can really work on different aspects of my life, different parts of my growth and really move forward in a healthy direction. Being disciplined in such a way that it is more like they are there with you, they are living life with you, and when they see something that is maybe not Kingdom values they kind of help you through it and ease you into what would be more like Kingdom values. So yeah, it has definitely been, I think it has definitely met my expectations in that sense of really just providing that environment. Going into details, I didn't really necessarily have expectations so much as, because I didn't fully know what to expect with it, but the initial expectations, my one friend said that, my face would melt or something on DTS, which hasn't happened, but uh

John.

Whatever that meant.

Aaron.

Whatever that meant. I don't know exactly what she meant, but yeah, so it's been a really blessed time, and it has definitely stood up and been a very good thing.

John.

If you look back over these almost six months of your DTS, can you tell me a story about something that has impacted you?

1:49

Aaron.

Ah. [Sigh]. Sorry. I think one, one story that kind of impacted me was when we were on outreach it was one of the, it was a house visit we went to, one of the genocide survivors and she told her story about how her neighbour had killed her husband and her kids and all that, which I think someone talked about here as well on Monday or something. But she had just such love, and she had totally forgiven the neighbour and had even tried to reconcile and find him and let him know that she forgave him and all this stuff. It was just crazy. And that, you know we have when we are in this community because that was like our first week of outreach. It was kind of one of my first experiences of seeing like that deep of faith in action when I mean she was living in nothing. And she absolutely was so joyful. Just nothing but smiles and she just had so much faith in God and faith in his provision. It was just so inspiring. And then that was really powerful.

And then there was also this one night where we were praying for people and I got, that was probably the night where I felt like I was, like I really felt that I was hearing God's voice, more than any other time. To where I would like hear something, and I would say it, and it was like spot on the word. They would say it was, Partly I think that night I was just a little more brave in speaking out what I was getting. And it was really cool. This one lady kind of was manifesting and screaming and all this stuff and then I, we, and then I would like pray, and we led her through freedom prayer and all this stuff. And it was just a really cool experience of Wow this is. Like I am really hearing God's voice.

And one, on the lecture phase was just simply I would, it changed everything for me for worship, where I was just upstairs in the prayer room playing my ukulele and doing my one song, 'Break every chain'. And then before long I had a couple of people join me and then a few more people and I literally just played the one song for over an hour. But, I mean, we were getting super deep in prayer and worship with it, and during it I really felt God saying I can be a worship leader and like all this. So that was, yeah, those were things that really impacted me.

John.

Was worship leading something you did before DTS?

Aaron.

Um. I have played in worship bands, but I have never worship led. So, I have been usually a member of the band, like playing keyboards or something, but I have never, and maybe a backup singer, but I have never, before DTS I had never led worship. And so, after that night where I had played and stuff, I went and talked to Steve and Allan, and they signed me up to lead base worship. So, I led that and then I led a couple of Harbours and a couple of base worship times. I led a few worship sessions on outreach, and that was really an amazing time for there.

5:44

John.

Great. What connections do you see between the activities you have done on DTS and the Bible?

Aaron.

Hmm. Um. I think the biggest is just the activities that we do, like especially on outreach, and even here is things that really try to resemble like what Jesus would do. Like on outreach we would go and love on the poor, and heal and try to pray for the sick, and pray for them and just go to hospitals and clean or whatever. Like the actual action was always very much the type of thing Jesus would have done. And just putting us in that environment and providing that activity. You know, like OK, this is what we are going to do today. Whatever our heart was for that day with it, the activity itself was definitely in the direction of this is where, this is what Jesus would do and, you know. But definitely our hearts, to really be like Jesus, our hearts need to be in the right places as well, besides just going through the motions. And, but at least the activities themselves and even on base praying for people, or praying for countries and helping out around the house and trying to be servants to each other. They definitely, they provide an environment, those activities that help you practice what living like Jesus would be like. Whether you take that well, and you do it with that Jesus like heart, you know that servant heart, or if you just kind of go through the motions, that's up to you. But at least the environment and the activities are provided that push you in biblical standards.

07:50

John.

If you were to gather a group of people and do something good for the world, what would you do?

Aaron.

I would, I think I would accept the fact that I can't change the entire world. However, we would be able to change people's worlds. Because each person is in their own world, in their own, they all have their own reality. And in order you could, we have a capacity to change that person's reality and help bring about new life in them with God in us. We can be that vessel, so I think with a group of people I would go to somewhere, potentially Africa or Asia or somewhere there, where there is really a lot of need, someplace with a lot of need and set up a like an orphanage or and really. Like one that really comes to mind that I thought was amazing. We went to this orphanage where it was kind of a big compound, but each house had a mother and father and just six kids or something in each thing. And so, each house was their own family, and they were like grouping them by the ages. So, a family they would be similar ages within a few years of each other, and that's how they lived life instead of all together in this huge compound. It was like this family and this family. And I really like that. And so, I think I would with this group of people try to make something like that happen more. Because like one of my best friends on outreach was a guy that came from a similar home like that, that was an orphan. And growing up his life had been completely changed by a guy from Canada who had come and started an orphanage with some friends. So, it would be the same kind of thing where I felt to be a part of that. Because for him, his world has changed. We can't change the world, but we can change, they changed his world, like they brought him into a whole new reality. And so, we can't change every person, but we can change some.

10:17

John.

If you were to finish the sentence, Aaron is, how would you finish it right now?

Aaron.

I would say. I think the first thing that comes to mind is. Aaron is passionate. I would say.

John.

And what does that mean?

Aaron.

Just that whatever it is that. In a lot of ways, I think the word I would use is intense, more than passionate. Where if I commit to something, where I am going to do this. I am going to give it everything I have and go for it and not, you know, do my best not to really hold back from it. If someone gives me a project to do or if I need to, I am going to do my best and not go halfway with it, to the best of my ability, go as far as I can. Yeah.

John.

Cool. There is an old-fashioned word called zeal, or being zealous.

Aaron.

Yeah. I have heard of zeal! [Laughter].

11:41

John.

What qualities do you value in a person?

Aaron.

Honesty. Being, I would say, steadfast. They are going to stay the same in a lot of situations. Definitely trustworthy. Courageous. Loving.

12:18

John.

If you were to finish the sentence, Goodness is, how would you finish it?

Aaron.

Goodness is godliness.

John.

And a good person? A good person is?

Aaron.

A good person is someone who is, knows they are a sinner, but is striving every day to become more like Jesus.

12:57

John.

And how would you describe a good community? A good community is.

Aaron.

One that has a very open, vulnerable, the people in it are very open and honest with each other. And just real. That it is a real community where. I think that is what makes a good community. Where it is not a bunch of fake people, but it is people, knowing that they have struggles and being open and honest. I am struggling with this. Because once you do that, you find out really quickly that a lot of people in community are struggling with similar things and that deepens community a lot more than when everyone is trying to hide in the dark. So, I think the first things of community is 'open', real and then kind of the same things as an individual. The same things. If you have a community full of individuals who have those values, usually the community itself will have them very strong. So, an honest community, a trustworthy community. To stretch themselves and help out.

14:09

John.

If you were to tell me about one or two vices you are still struggling with or seeking to step out of, what would you tell me and what would be the process of stepping out of them.



Aaron.

Um. I think the one that comes to mind is. You know, I don't know the exact words to say but kind of like insignificance that kind of thing. Where. Or maybe comparison is better. Where I will see someone and just compare myself to them. And a lot of times maybe feel insignificant compared to the person or whatever. And then, so I think that is definitely a big vice I have and walking out of that I would say is definitely continually going back to God and asking him how he sees me and how, who I was made to be. And I was made to be, not that person, and that's OK. They might have value, I have something in me that they don't have, and they might have something in them that I don't have, but that's fine. That's how God created us to be. And just walking into that, walking into that freedom of, 'This is who God created me to be, and that's OK. And I don't need to compare to them.' So that's the only thing that comes to mind, I think.

15:45

John.

Good. If we were to think about how our loves or our desires in our heart, are changing or maybe being reordered, do you have anything to say about how your desires or loves have changed over the last six months?

Aaron.

Um. I think definitely the desires and loves have changed in the sense that I really. More so than I did, I really desire a kind of coming together of people, where there is no longer any sort of them and us. Because the community I came from, like we had a lot of Native Americans and stuff, and growing up there was a lot of them and us mentality. It was so prevalent in the culture, that I didn't necessarily see how big, you know how wrong it was. And then coming here and growing in that and really being like, you know, it doesn't matter any of that. We need to love these people. We need to. There is no them and us. We are all one in the Kingdom.

And the way the Lord just really also truly figuring out how to love people that maybe I don't like that much. It is maturing in that way of ignoring someone, not loving them and all these different things and trying to move forward in how do I love someone I don't like. Or how and what does that actually look like in Kingdom values. And slowly getting better at that. Where I don't necessarily have to. They don't have to necessarily be my favourite person in the world where I am constantly sitting by them, but I am very much still loving them and being somebody who will still encourage them and big for them and help them out. Yeah, so those are a couple of ways. And also, just deepening in friendship wise of really finding out how to love in the way of having deeper love for each other by actually being more open and real. Like before DTS I wasn't very open with who I am, who I was, or whatever. And I never necessarily saw how much that affected the relationships, the friendships or family members or anything. Where my being very closed off was how much it affected the deepness of the love we could share. When starting to become more open and actually learning how to have friendships where you are open and honest and seeing the fruit of that where it creates a much deeper love for one another. So that has been a very cool thing to see.

19:15

John.

Cool. What do you think makes a good learning community?

Aaron.

Learning community? Um. One where people are truly striving to learn more as well. Like they are, you are all trying to learn the same thing. Because then you can bounce off ideas off each other, thoughts you have, inspirations all these different things you can. That type of environment really helps learning. As far as universities and programmes where it is like. These are your medical students because they are all learning the same direction there. They are going to be able to help each other, and they will help each other stay focused on what the goal is. And so that is, so here learning about God in this environment is amazing because everyone is striving for God. They want a deeper relationship with God. So, when you, yourself are learning how to have a deeper relationship with God, it is a perfect environment for that process, because everyone wants it. You know back home, or anywhere in the secular world where you are surrounded by people who don't want that, it makes it very hard for you to want to go and learn more because you are constantly being pushed down by the environment where everyone wants you to grow. And wants to grow themselves. Even if it is the teachers. Because God is infinite, there is always more things to know. God is, there are always more ways to experience God. Even like the people who have been learning for a very long time are still learning, and they are happy to help you along with what they know. But also, they are eager to learn themselves. And that is a really cool. I think that is the kind of environment where it is centred around, we all want to know more. You know you might be in different areas, in different places, but the goal is all the same, you just want to know him more. And that's, I think really cool, for a learning environment.

21:26

John.

Cool. Where do you see your life headed now?

Aaron.

Um. Well currently I feel called to go back to Africa, to actually stay there long term and be a part of the YWAM base there and part of the ministries that they do there.

John.

A particular place?

Aaron.

Um. In Burundi, which is where I went for outreach. There, in the main city there, Bujumbura, working with their DTS there. Staffing that and also just helping out with the ministries they have there. And so currently I am continuing to pray about it. But I will let them know in the next few weeks. If I am coming back, I will go back in September. So, between end of DTS and then I am just going to go and rebuild. I am doing a secondary school [UofN 'second level' nine month School of Biblical Studies (SBS)] in Montana and also rebuilding my friendships in the communities back home and getting more support. Mostly I want, I need people who are behind me prayer wise because, like financially, it is a very cheap place to live and. So yeah, that is the current I think plan that I feel God calling me to.

23:00

John.

Great. Is there any other story or anything else about your DTS that you would like to tell me?

Aaron.

Um. I think one that is for me personally that is really cool is that before coming to DTS I was just really like I wanted to be more open about my past and all this stuff. And I just wanted to kind of be a lot more with the community there just be more vulnerable with them. And so, before coming to DTS, I had just been praying to have courage to do all those types of things. And we got to DTS in the first week of orientation we did the first or second day we did testimonies, and I went first. I kind of just word vomited, not everything in my life, but my really big things that were, all the bad stuff and the way, and also the good things and just kind of getting that stuff out there. But then really kind of being in this place where I was almost ready to go home if people weren't going to accept it. That type of thing. And then right after the testimonies all of my roommates were like, "Hey man, we are, we're still like. We just met you, but we love you, and we're here for you." And Steve came, and I met with him, and he was just like, "We are here to help you and get you through this." So, I think that was one of the most instant, on the DTS, just second day or first day or something, was already it had done more in my life in a moment than a lot of stuff in years. Because it was just like more than I realized people could accept different parts of me and it was OK. So that was really very impactful for me. Yeah. I mean there is just random cool stories from outreach, but yeah.

25:35

John.

That's great. Thanks so much Aaron for sharing with me and yeah, I really enjoyed listening.

Aaron.

Yeah. No problem. Recording ended 25:43.

### **Annex Nine: Sample Interview Page with All Nodes Coding**

This is a sample of one page at 1:49 of the same interview coded in NVivo 12 and exported. The page repeats three times so that all the coding nodes are revealed.



Aaron.  
Whatever that meant. I don't know exactly what she meant, but yeah, so it's been a really blessed time and it has definitely stood up and been a very good thing.

John.  
If you look back over these almost six months of your DTS, can you tell me a story about something that has impacted you?

1:49

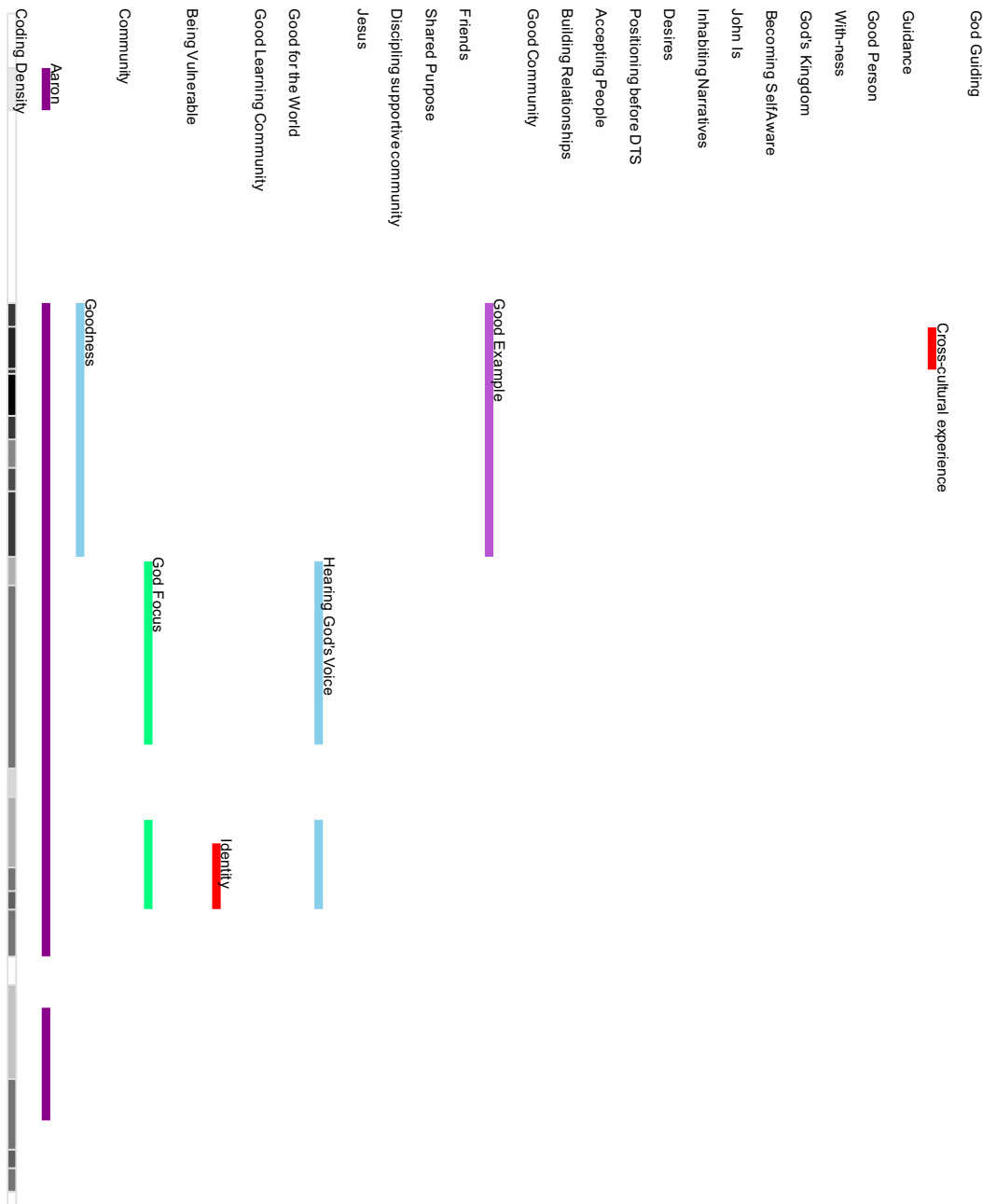
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And then there was also this one night where we were praying for people and I got, that was probably the night where I felt like I was, like I really felt that I was hearing God's voice, more than any other time. To where I would like hear something and I would say it and it was like spot on the word. They would say it was, Partly I think that night I was just a little more brave in speaking out what I was getting. And it was really cool. This one lady, kind of was manifesting and screaming and all this stuff and then I, we, and then I would like pray and we led her through freedom prayer and all this stuff. And it was just a really cool experience of Wow this is. Like I am really hearing God's voice.

And one, on the lecture phase was just simply I would, it changed everything for me for worship, where I was just upstairs in the prayer room playing my ukulele and doing my one song, 'Break every chain'. And then before long I had a couple of people join me and then a few more people and I literally just played the one song for over an hour. But, I mean, we were getting super deep in prayer and worship with it and during it I really felt God saying I can be a worship leader and like all this. So that was, yeah, those were things that really impacted me.

John.  
Was worship leading something you did before DTS?

Aaron.  
Um. I have played in worship bands, but I have never worship led. So, I have been usually a member of the band, like playing keyboards or something, but I have never, and maybe a backup singer, but I have never, before DTS I had never led worship. And so, after that night where I had played and stuff I went and talked to Steve and Allan and they signed me up to lead base worship. So, I led that and then I led a couple of Harbours and a couple of base



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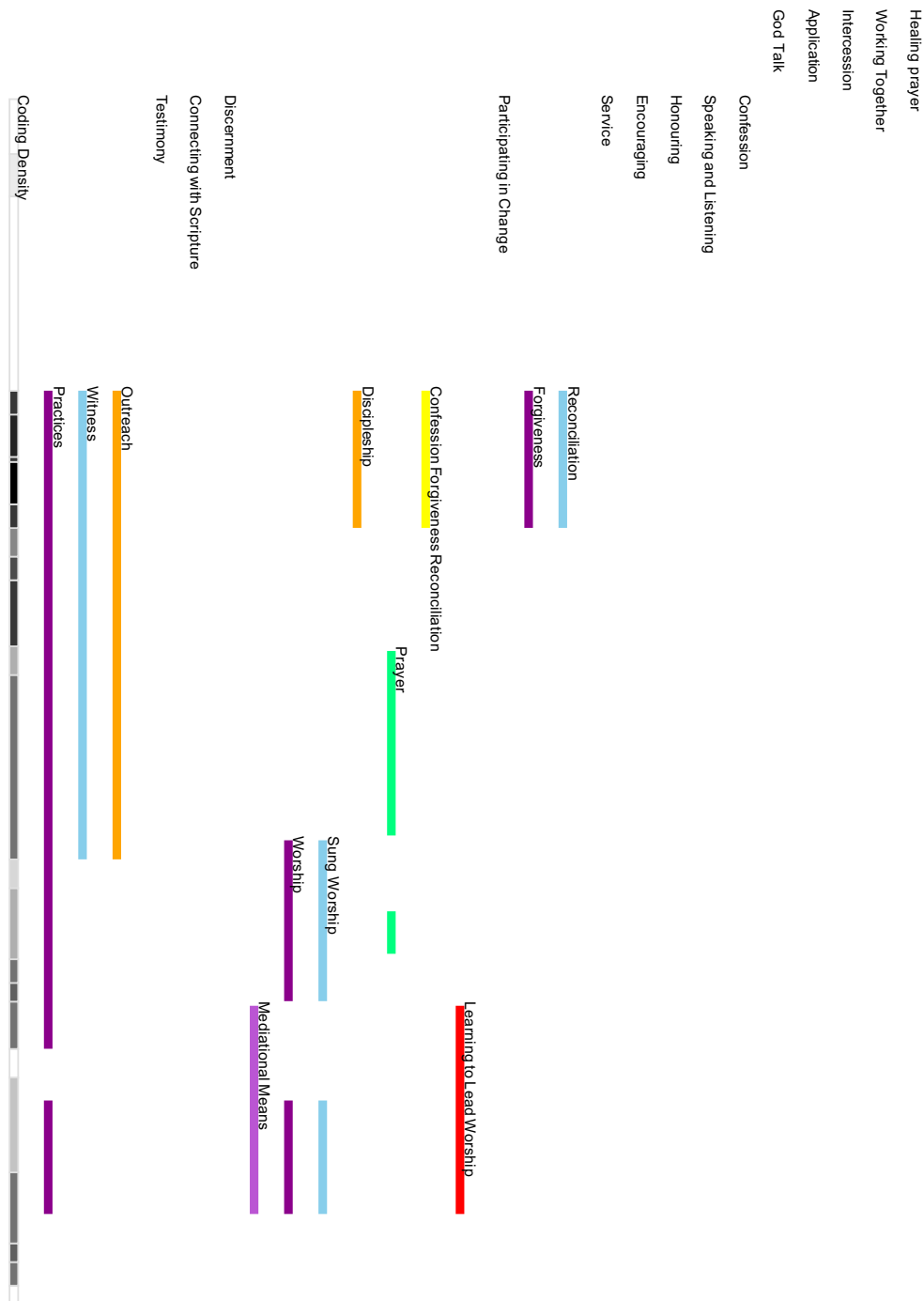
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## **Annex Ten: Footwashing as a Christian Practice**

### **Footwashing in DTS**



(Peachey 2017)

### **Footwashing as an ancient Christian practice in the gospel narrative of John 13**



(Hu 2017)

**Footwashing extended as a symbolic act in the modern refugee crisis.**



(Shahzad 2016)

<https://en.dailypakistan.com.pk/world/video-pope-francis-washes-kisses-feet-of-muslim-refugees/> published March 25, 2016

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## Oral Sources

### **Participant Primary Sources and Data Collection Timeline**

Primary data was collected from DTS participants from February 2014 to November 2017. This was mostly recorded semi-structured interviews, but it also included DTS practice transcriptions, personal journals, and recorded testimonies. Informed consent was always obtained. Codes in the table below are used to cite primary sources in the thesis. The last number (1, 2, or 3) in alphanumeric codes such as (2MS1) indicates the first, second or third interview. A code ending in ‘J’ such as (8DJJ) indicates entries from a DTS personal journal. Entries ending in T, such as (12KDT) indicate a recorded oral testimony. The table below also identifies Type 1 expertise without an asterisk, Type 2 with two asterisks, and Type 3 with three asterisks.

### Primary Data Collection Timeline

Year	2014	2015		2016			2017	
Quarter	Feb	Mar	Dec	Mar	May-Sep	Oct	Mar	Sep/Oct
Focus Group								
HmDTS		FG(14)						
Interviews								
HaDTS	NF							
	TL							
	RS**							
			CC					
			GD					
			TP					
				BK				
				SK				
NuDTS				SJ				
				IC				
				ER				
				LP				
				ML				
				RD				
				JM				
				EE**				
				MP**				
IDTSL		CP***						
		MM1***			MM2***			
		PT***						
		TB***						
		EC***						
					LW***			
					HE***			

Year	2014	2015		2016			2017	
Quarter	Feb	Mar	Dec	Mar	May-Sep	Oct	Mar	Sep/Oct
RoDTS						1SM1	1SM2	1SM3
						2MS1	2MS2	2MS3
						4EK1	4EK2	4EK3
						5CG1	5CG2	5CG3
						6BP1	6BP2	
						7MA1	7MA2	7MA3
						8DJ1	8DJ2	8DJ3
						9MN1	9MN2	9MN3
						10AP1	10AP2	
						11SO1	11SO2	
						12KD1	12KD2	12KD3
						13WC1**	13WC2**	13WC3**
						14AA1**	14AA2**	
						15MH1	15MH2	15MH3
						16DC1	16DC2	16DC3
						17SH1	17SH2	17SH3
						18BR1	18BR2	18BR3
						19MR1	19MR2	19MR3
						20MC1	20MC2	20MC3
						21YB1**	21YB2**	21YB3**
						22JK1	22JK2	22JK3
						23SS1**	23SS2**	
						24JC**		
						25CB1	25CB2	25CB3
						26AR**		
						27JW1	27JW2	27JW3
							AMH**	
<b>RoDTS Practices</b>								
<b>Footwashing</b>							FootW2	
<b>Giving</b>							Giving2	
<b>Intercession</b>						InterC1	InterC2	
<b>Liturgy</b>							Liturgy2	
<b>Reconciliation</b>							Recon2	
<b>Seeking God</b>						SeekG1		
<b>Teaching</b>						Teach1		
<b>Worship</b>						Worship1		
<b>RoDTS Journals</b>								
							8DJJ	
							18BRJ	
							22JKJ	
<b>RoDTS Testimonies</b>								
							12KDT	
							16DCT	
							20MCT	
							25CBT	
							23SST**	

Expertise Types 1, 2 (\*\*), and 3 (\*\*\*)

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